Probable cause found vs man who allegedly choked woman. PAGE 3
EDA awards $6M for vocational school at MHS. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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AS COUNSEL IN JGO INVESTIGATION, OTHERS

Torres hires Banes' law firm

Banes

Birnbrich

Torres

» Garber law firm will also represent Torres in Gaming Committee's investigation related to IPI, other matters

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres confirmed yesterday that he has also hired the law firm of David G. Banes as his counsel, in addition to a Washington, D.C.-based law firm to represent him in the ongoing investigation of the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee on his expenditures of public funds and travels, and other matters.

See TORRES on Page 4

OPA: Medical Referral overspent by $27M in fiscal years 2018-2019

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The lack of effective internal controls at the CNMI Medical Referral Services Office has led the entity to spend $27 million over its budget from fiscal years 2018 to 2019, according to the Office of the Public Auditor.

Also, according to the OPA audit report released on Sept. 23, the Office of the Attorney General has determined that Executive Order 2013-09 had no legal authority to reassign the office from the Commonwealth Healthcare

See OPA on Page 4

CNMI's COVID-19 case total now 266

» Guam: 183rd and 184th COVID deaths reported; 64 hospitalized

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One more incoming traveler has tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 266, according to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. last Friday.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center reported last Thursday the island's 183rd and 184th COVID-19-related deaths and reported that as of Sept. 25 there are 64 COVID-19-related active hospitalizations in the territory.

See COVID-19 on Page 4

'SMALL BUSINESS SUNDAY'

High Tide provides live entertainment during yesterday's "Small Business Sunday" at Sugar King Park. For the third time ever, Tyler's Gelatte Stone held what it calls "Small Business Sunday," an event where the community is treated to live music and small businesses are invited to promote and sell their products. "Small Business Sunday" is held at the Sugar King Park from 3pm to 6pm. JOSHUA SANTOS

AT A GLANCE

As of 8:38pm, Sept. 26, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: 81.7%

Days since last community transmission: 186

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	29,987
Fully Vaccinated:	29,224
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,860
Fully Vaccinated:	4,633
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	791

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14,098	276*	14,374
Recovered	10,978	27	11,005
Active	2,909	276	3,185
Deaths	184	0	184

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	265	1	266
Traced via Travel Screening	228	1	229
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

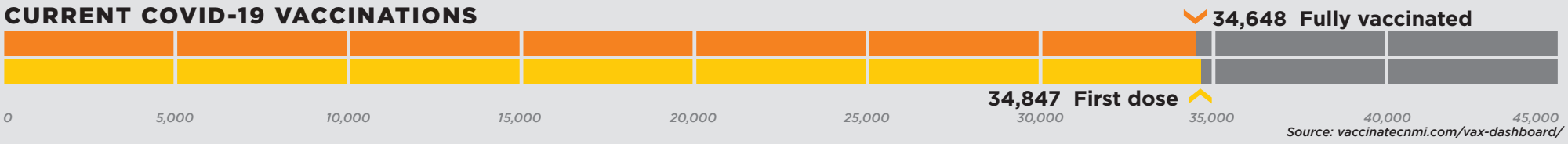
*9/24=150 new cases; 9/25=31 new cases; 9/26=95 new cases
Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

LOCAL
Vivien Liu and Christina Kim are recognized as semifinalists by the National Merit Corp.
PAGE 2

BUSINESS
Bank of Hawaii is named Best Big Bank in Hawaii in *Newsweek*'s Best Banks rankings.
PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
Vice President Kamala Harris' interview on "The View" is delayed after hosts test positive for COVID-19.
PAGE 15

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

MHS' Liu and Kim named National Merit Scholarship semifinalists

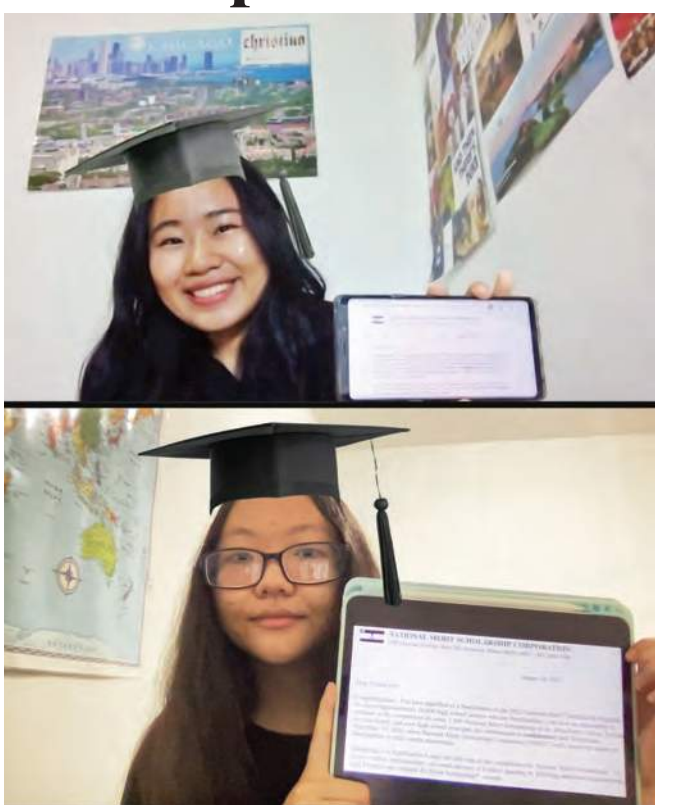
Vivien Liu and Christina Kim of Marianas High School were recognized as semifinalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, along with two other students in the CNMI.

This year, 16,000 students earned this title, representing approximately 1% of the 1.5 million students who took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Liu and Kim were both named Questbridge College Prep Scholars and were accepted into several fly-in programs for top colleges in the United States.

Through QuestBridge Prep, Kim was able to experience Yale University's summer program with a full scholarship. She was also contacted by the West Point admission officer and was considered for the Letter of Assurance several months ago, which is a conditional acceptance to West Point Class of 2026. In addition, she passed all six of her Advanced Placement classes and has been recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction.

When asked about the semifinalist title, she said, "Despite already having been recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction, as well as being a national representative for the CNMI for MathCourt, National Speech and Debate Association, and Mock Trial, I still take immense pride in my most recent accomplishment as a National Merit semifinalist. I found out that I was a semifinalist only after the article recognizing the other two students in the CNMI was published. I was disheartened because I thought nobody from our class in Marianas High School was a Merit Scholar. After I found out, I wanted to share this exciting news with my community. I hope that the future classes at MHS can continue this tradition of keeping Marianas High School on the list of schools that have Merit Scholars."

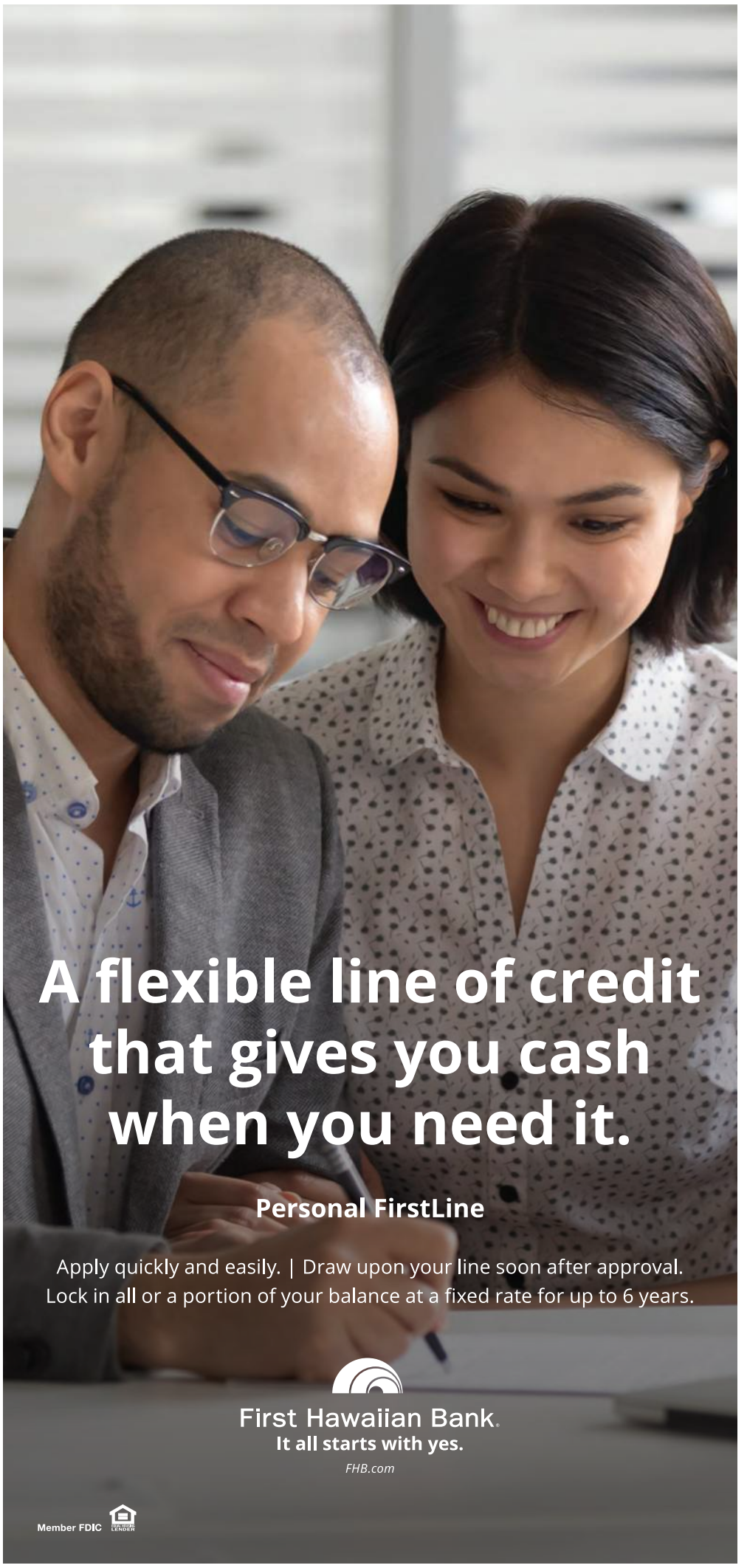


Christina Kim, top photo, and Vivien Liu have been recognized as semifinalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, along with two other students in the CNMI. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Liu has represented the CNMI in national competitions for Speech & Debate, Mock Trial, Short Film, Theatrical Scenic Design, and Aeronautics. She is currently the MHS Mock Trial captain and Honor Society president. Having taken six AP classes and receiving 5s on all of them, she was also named an AP Scholar with Distinction, courtesy of the Collegeboard's Advanced Placement Program.

When asked about the context of her recognition, she said, "It's been especially tough for most of us locally, in the Class of 2022, because our school year has been interrupted every single year since we started high school. I had to do a lot of self-studying to catch up on the standards tested in the SAT, but my hard work

See MHS on Page 4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NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, October 1, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

Probable cause found vs man who allegedly choked woman over hickey

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court gas found probable cause to try a man who is currently charged with strangulation, among other charges, after he allegedly choked a woman for refusing a hickey from him.

Last week, Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan found probable cause to charge 69-year-old Arnold Ilo Kapileo of strangulation, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace following a probable cause hearing.

During the hearing, Kapileo was represented by assistant public defender Emily Thompson while assistant attorney general Steven Kessel represented the government.

Kapileo was ordered to return to court for his arraignment today, Sept. 27.

Bogdan also granted Kapileo's request to be released to his daughter as his third-party custodian after posting 10% of his original $7,500 cash bail in a separate order.

According to the victim, Kapileo punched and choked her after she did not let him put a "hickey" on her neck.

The victim told police that Kapileo came home drunk on the evening of Sept. 14 and allegedly tried to place a hickey on her neck "very hard." She said that when she pushed him away, he got upset and started packing his belongings.

When Kapileo asked for his betel nut bag and his money, she told him that he brought it with him when he left earlier and that she did not touch it.

She said Kapileo got upset and allegedly punched her neck, her back, and waist. He also allegedly tried to choke her.

When she tried to run to her neighbor's unit, the victim said Kapileo allegedly chased her, pressed his elbow on her neck, pushed her down on the floor and used his other hand to pull her hair.

The victim said she felt Kapileo's elbow on her neck pressing hard and she felt dizzy, got a headache, and had a hard time breathing afterwards.

The neighbor told police that she heard the victim screaming and saw Kapileo grabbing the victim's hair, punching her three times, choking her, pulling her hair, and punching her again.

Police stated in their report that the victim had a large bruise on her neck, on the back side of her shoulder, and bruise marks on her lower torso.

Probation sentence proposed for man in fraud case

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The defense counsel in the case involving a man who pleaded guilty to license fraud has proposed a probation sentence for his client.

According to Steven Pixley, defense lawyer for Margarito Cortez Villafuerte, a probation sentence is appropriate because, pursuant to the plea agreement that his client signed, the U.S. government had agreed to recommend that the court impose a sentence no longer than seven days in prison.

"Villafuerte has accepted full responsibility for his actions and there exist no aggravating circumstances weighing in favor of incarceration. Villafuerte wants to return to his family in the Philippines as soon as this case is resolved," Pixley stated.

In addition, based on the findings of the U.S. Probation Office, a total offense level of 4 and a criminal history category of 1— which applies in Villafuerte's case—sets the guideline imprisonment range from zero to six months.

Pixley also argues that the sentencing court should avoid unwarranted sentence disparities among defendants with similar records who have been found guilty of similar conduct, siting the case of Mingjin Jin as an example.

"This court in recent years has sentenced similarly-situated defendants to probation. For example, on May 28, 2021, this court sentenced Mingjin Jin to serve a term of one-year probation. A sentence of probation would comport with this sentencing requirement," he said.

According to court documents, Villafuerte, 64 and a Filipino citizen who had no immigration status, paid someone $150 so he could obtain a CNMI driver's license. Four years later, on June 23, 2021, Villafuerte was charged with conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document. He entered into a plea agreement on Aug. 31, 2021 where declared that he fully accepted responsibility for his actions.

"I know it was illegal and that I was breaking the law… but I needed a driver's license so I could drive my sister who had cancer. I understand that the way I obtained my driver's license in 2017 and 2014 was a serious violation of U.S. laws. I am sorry for breaking the law and I'm willing to take responsibility for that," he stated.

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PACIFICPOINTS
IT&E

Torres wants to make sure no partial shutdown of govt operations

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the budget plan for the CNMI government operations for fiscal year 2022 already transmitted to his desk Thursday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday that they are going to work through it to make sure there's not shutdown of operations for government employees.

Speaking at his regular radio press briefing, Torres said he has yet to really go over the budget bill but that they will be reviewing it that day, Friday, and throughout the weekend and into this week.

"I just review it and we'll go from there," he said.

The governor encouraged the Legislature to act on the budget bill sooner the next time around, that this is the Legislature's fiduciary duty.

Torres said he gave the budget proposal to the House of Representatives last April 1, then revised it in July. "And every year here we are again. With this, I'm left with less than a week to sign it," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

COVID-19

From Page 1

CHCC Friday said that the new COVID-19 case was identified by travel screening and was confirmed positive through arrival testing on Sept. 24. The individual has since been quarantined and is being monitored, and CHCC said that contact tracing has already been initiated for those who were in closest contact with the individual. CHCC also reported that there are currently no COVID-19-related active hospitalizations.

JIC in Guam reported on Sept. 23 the island's two most recent COVID-19-related deaths, both occurring at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Sept. 23.

The 183rd death was a vaccinated 76-year-old male with multiple underlying health conditions who tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 13.

The 184th death was an unvaccinated 56-year-old male with multiple underlying health conditions who tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 8.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero last Thursday offered her condolences and spoke of the importance of paying attention to COVID-19 "warning signs" and maintaining precautionary measures.

"We express our deepest condolences to their loved ones this evening, joining the island in offering our prayers for healing and comfort. The virus continues to disrupt our wellbeing [but] our attentiveness to the warning signs and maintaining precautionary measures against the spread could put an end to this disruption," said Leon Guerrero.

On Sept. 25, JIC reported that there are currently 64 individuals in Guam who are actively hospitalized due to COVID-19. Of the 64, 37 are unvaccinated, the JIC reported.

OPA

From Page 1

Corp. to the Office of the Governor.

The OPA report noted that the MRSO operation has incurred a large variance between the appropriated amount and its reported expenditures. OPA showed a table that reflects the increase of expenditures for each fiscal year and have raised significant concerns regarding MRSO's budget control and cash management.

This suggests, the auditor said, that the program has either been underfunded by the Legislature and/or overspending its allocation.

The MRSO is intended to provide CNMI residents with the means to obtain medical care and treatment that are not available in the Commonwealth for conditions that are life-threatening.

In its audit on MRSO for fiscal years 2018 to 2020, OPA intended to determine if effective internal controls are in place to ensure proper cash management, issue and enforce promissory notes, and ensure compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulation when determining patient and escort eligibility.

OPA noted that MRSO provides financial assistance for medical expenses, air transportation, lodging, ground transportation, and subsistence allowance. Yet OPA has found that MRSO does not have standard operating procedures for any of its three offices on Saipan, Guam, and in Hawaii.

"The lack of internal controls, such as standard operating procedures, to ensure an affordable, effective, and equitable program poses an ongoing potential risk for fraud, waste, and abuse," OPA said.

At OPA's request for an opinion, the Office of the Attorney General provided an opinion dated June 16, 2021, indicating that MRSO has no legal basis to execute promissory notes to medical referral patients for medical financial assistance.

Yet last May 3, OPA received a listing of promissory notes executed from 1995 to 2020. OPA said that based on that, about 630 promissory notes amounting to an estimated $12 million were executed. However, OPA found that about 270 promissory notes reflect only partial or full payment equating to an estimated total of just $420,000. OPA said the remaining estimated $11 million is outstanding as of May 3, 2021. The issuance and execution of promissory notes is at the discretion of the MRSO director.

OPA said upon reviewing the data provided by MRSO last May 3, they noted that an estimated $2 million promissory note was executed for one patient and signifies patients are able to avail of more than one promissory note and with potentially unlimited amounts.

OPA said they have been notified that the promissory note in question was executed in 2010, however, the estimated $2 million was erroneously entered in the listing provided to OPA for review.

"This indicates that promissory notes are not reconciled for accuracy and completeness," OPA said.

OPA said audit procedures revealed that MRSO is not enforcing its process for collection as stated in its promissory notes.

Saipan Tribune will publish other findings, recommendations, and more details of OPA's report.

MHS

From Page 2

has paid off. So much of the National Merit recognition lies in the full-ride scholarships offered by schools like the University of Central Florida, University of Alabama, etc., so I'm hopeful to pursue higher education without burdening my family with things like student loans."

She added, "I've been in the CNMI's public school system since K5: I went to Garapan for elementary school, Hopwood for middle school, and now MHS for high school. In the classroom, I learned the basics of English and math, but through my activities, I was afforded the opportunity to apply it. I'm honored to have earned this national recognition, but it's also given me a lot to think about. There's a stigma associated with public schools: a lot of people seem to think that they're not as rigorous or academically demanding. I think that's not true; I am deeply grateful to all teachers in the CNMI for devoting themselves to ensuring we actually learned the material, for understanding that some students have difficult home lives, for being funny and kind and most importantly, for believing in us." ***(PR)***

TORRES

From Page 1

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry, Torres said his office has indeed hired the Banes Horey Berman & Miller law firm but he did not elaborate. Later, Gilbert Birnbrich, legal counsel for the Office of the Governor, told *Saipan Tribune* that the contract is between the law firm of Banes Horey Berman & Miller and the Office of the Governor.

Birnbrich said the contract is not with a specific attorney and is meant to provide advice and representation to the Office of the Governor in relation to the investigation of the JGO Committee.

He said the law firm is also retained to provide advice and representation to the Office of the Governor in any other investigation conducted by the House, if the Office of the Governor requests such services from the law firm.

Birnbrich said to be clear, Banes Horey Berman & Miller law firm has not been retained to act as co-counsel with the Garber Group LLC or Ross Garber.

"They have been separately retained to help the Office of the Governor with House investigations," he said.

Birnbrich said under CNMI procurement regulations, every professional services contract such as the one with Banes Horey Berman & Miller must have a "ceiling price," i.e., a maximum amount to be expended under the contract. In this case, he said, that number is $50,000, but that does not mean that the amount will actually be spent under the contract.

"That is just the maximum amount allowed under the contract," Birnbrich said.

He said under this contract, the Office of the Governor is charged by the hour plus expenses for the services of the attorneys. "This type of arrangement is also the most common arrangement between a private individual and a lawyer," he said.

Similar to an arrangement between a private person and a lawyer, the Office of the Governor also paid a retainer fee, Birnbrich said. He said this retainer fee acts as a pre-payment and can be drawn on by the law firm as monthly fees are charged to the client (here, the Office of the Governor).

He said the retainer fee also serves as a type of security deposit. "When the contract is ended, for whatever reason, the balance of the retainer, if any, will be returned to the government," Birnbrich said.

He said in their contract, the Office of the Governor paid $5,000 as a retainer fee.

Saipan Tribune obtained yesterday a copy of Torres' request to Division of Procurement services acting director Francisco C. Aguon dated Aug. 18, 2021, for a sole source justification for the award of a contract to the Garber law firm for legal services.

In that request, Torres disclosed that the Office of the Governor has hired the law firm of Banes Horey Berman & Miller to provide similar services.

Torres said the Office of the Governor believes that the hiring of the Ross Garber law firm is not necessarily duplicative.

He said lawyers of Garber Group LLC are experts in litigation and constitutional issues surrounding legislative investigations. Torres said Banes law firm can still have a role in assisting the governor's legal counsel and the Office of the Governor in matters related to the House investigations.

Saipan Tribune has yet to obtain a copy of Banes' contract.

Banes and his law firm served as counsel for Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig in a corruption case filed against Atalig and his common-law wife by the U.S. government before the U.S. District Court for the NMI. The case against the Ataligs dragged for nearly two years but ended in August 2020 with federal court jurors unanimously finding the Ataligs innocent of all charges.

In his Aug. 18 request for a sole-source contract for the Garber law firm's services, Torres said the price proposed by Garber is reasonable as the law firm proposes a rate of $731 per hour, which is a 25% discount from the $975 per hour rate the law firm ordinarily charges.

He said the law firm requests a retainer or advance payment of $25,000 and that the initial contract amount is capped at $150,000, to adhere to regulatory requirements directing that contracts establish ceiling prices.

The Garber Group LLC law firm, is known for its expertise in impeachment proceedings. Garber teaches a class on political investigations and impeachments at Tulane School. He regularly provides legal commentary for CNN, according to their website.

Torres declared that he has complied with the Commonwealth procurement regulations and that this contract with Garber is for a public purpose, and that the contract does not waste or abuse public funds.

He said the Office of the Governor has a critical need to increase the capacity to provide legal services.

Torres said the Office of the Attorney General had declined to represent him due to potential conflicts. He said, the OAG, however, did permit the Office of the Governor to seek outside counsel to provide legal services in relation to the investigations.

Saipan Tribune also obtained yesterday a copy of the contract between the Office of the Governor and Garber law firm. Torres and Garber signed the contract on Aug. 24, 2021.

Under the contract, Garber will begin its performance on Aug. 19, 2021, or upon receipt of a notice to proceed by the Office of the Governor, whichever is later.

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig certified on Aug. 23, 2021, that the $150,000 funds are available to commit for funding the contract. Attorney General Edward Manibusan certified on that same day, Aug. 23, that the contract was reviewed and approved as to form and legal capacity.

Aguon certified the contract completion on Aug. 25, 2021.

Under the contract, the Office of the Governor is retaining Garber, along with its attorneys, to provide legal services, advice and representation to the Office of the Governor in relation to the investigation of the JGO and the investigation of the House Committee on Gaming into the operation and governmental relations of the casino licensee Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC as it relates to Torres and Office of the Governor.

Garber will also represent Torres in any other legislative investigation that may arise. Representation may include litigation related to those investigations and may also include work on certified questions related to JGO investigation into Torres' expenditures. Any appellate or representation and work before the Supreme Court related to a certified question requires the consultation and consent of the AG before proceeding, according to the contract.

The JGO had already approved subpoena for Torres to testify. As of yesterday, he has yet to be issued a subpoena.

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios had already testified before the JGO.

On whether he plans to testify or with counsel before the JGO Committee, Torres earlier stated that they will deal with it when they get that subpoena.

The JGO hearing will resume today, Monday, at 10am, with the testimony of Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary P. Camacho.

EDA awards $6M for vocational school at MHS

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration is awarding a $6 million grant to the CNMI Public School System to support construction of a vocational training facility. The EDA grant, to be matched with $6 million in local investment, is expected to create 85 jobs.

A statement from the Office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said the money will be used to build a technical and career education center at Marianas High School. An EDA news release quotes assistant secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo as saying that the money will facilitate the construction of a two-story, 50,000-square foot facility to house hospitality, automotive technology, nursing, cosmetology, and other vocational training programs.

Commerce Secretary Gina M. Raimondo said in the same EDA news release that this grant will support the CNMI's ongoing recovery from the impact of Super Typhoon Yutu by expanding worker training opportunities "to ensure that the Commonwealth builds back stronger."

Sablan said he received word of the award shortly after meeting with Castillo. The PSS grant is the last of seven applications from the Commonwealth with the EDA for Super Typhoon Yutu recovery projects. EDA has now awarded $93,891,034.

"PSS has waited for over two years for this grant decision," Sablan said. "So, I thank Assistant Secretary Castillo for taking action today. And I thank President Biden's administration for the six long-awaited grants awarded this year."

The EDA news release quotes Gov. Ralph DLG Torres as saying, "Building our local workforce is a paramount priority here in the CNMI, and this vocational training facility for [PSS] will assist our ongoing efforts to develop skilled workers to fill jobs within our economy and improve the quality of life for our island community. …We are thankful to EDA for its partnership in rebuilding our economy and ensuring resiliency for our Commonwealth."

The Sablan news release states that funding for the EDA recovery grants and eligibility for the Marianas was included in U.S. Public Law 116-20 in June 2019 at Sablan's request. "Within a few months, Commonwealth agencies had submitted seven grant applications. But the Trump administration failed to act. Only one application—$10.7 million for the Northern Marianas College—received approval," it said.

Sablan said that congressional office staff met with the incoming Biden administration right after the November election to flag the long delay in these Yutu grants. "Once President Biden was sworn in, we finally started getting help. … All the Commonwealth's applications for Yutu recovery grants from EDA have now been awarded," Sablan added.

EDA also gave the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. $1.7 million from the Yutu recovery funds for a court-ordered water filtration system on Saipan.

PSS plans to match the $6 million grant from EDA with another $6 million of Community Development Block Grant funds, also provided by Congress in U.S. Public Law 116-20. The new technical and career training facility at the high school is expected to increase the pool of skilled, U.S. workers in the Marianas to offset dependence on a foreign workforce and provide higher paying jobs for PSS graduates. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Applicant	Project	Date Requested	Date Awarded	Amount
Northern Marianas College	Workforce Development and Training Center	7/3/19	12/16/20	$10,681,796
President Biden sworn in – January 20, 2021				
Office of the Governor	Garapan Revitalization Infrastructure	12/16/19	2/4/21	$11,177,918
Northern Marianas College	Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services Center	12/17/19	2/11/21	$13,190,280
Northern Marianas Technical Institute	Workforce Training Facility Construction Project	8/14/19	2/18/21	$10,324,264
Office of the Governor	Sports and Cultural Tourism Enhancement Project	12/22/19	6/3/21	$21,160,000
Department of Finance	Department of Finance Economic Resiliency Center	2/4/20	8/30/21	$19,630,360
Public School System	Career and Technical Education Center	9/10/19	9/23/21	$6,000,000
Total awarded from U.S. Public Law 116-20				$93,891,034

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MCS classes resume today

On Friday, Sept. 24, at 10am, the Office of the Governor declared the CNMI "All Clear" of Tropical Storm Mindulle. Mount Carmel School classes are to resume as scheduled today, Sept. 27, 2021. ***(PR)***

NMC campuses reopen today

At 10am Friday, the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency issued the "All Clear" for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With this declaration, classes for Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, at the Northern Marianas College resumed as scheduled and all NMC campuses will reopen today, Sept. 27, 2021.

There is some residual inclement weather from the depression that just passed, so continue to exercise caution. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-RFP-21-032

SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA ACQUISITION (SCADA) FOR POWER PLANT NO. 1, LOWER BASE, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation (Design, Supply and Installation) of SCADA system at its Primary Power Plant (Power Plant No.1), Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-032, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 13, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 22, 2021** to manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-036

Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $25.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-036, Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 15, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 23, 2021** to Manny Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to John C. Mafnas, Contracts Officer at john.mafnas@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NMI gets accredited, permanent Veterans Benefits counselor

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In what is being billed as a first for the CNMI, the Office of Veterans Affairs now has an accredited, full-time Veterans Benefits counselor.

Willie Peterson III, who is a legal administrative specialist for the Veterans Benefits Administration under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, will be helping the CNMI's veterans by submitting benefits claims directly to the Veterans Benefits Management System. Peterson said in an interview Thursday that he will be the CNMI's VB counselor for the foreseeable future, and explained what will be the nature of his work for the OVA.

As an accredited counselor, Peterson has direct access to the Veterans Benefits Management System, which is the DVA's federal database that it uses to accept, monitor, and decide on benefits claims filed by veterans throughout the nation. With access to the VBMS, Peterson can help the CNMI's veterans by submitting their benefits claims directly to the database and providing updates on the current status of their claims.

Peterson clarified that he does not decide on claims himself, but that benefits claims are submitted to a VA regional office for further review. For the CNMI, claims are forwarded to the Honolulu Regional Office of Veterans Affairs in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Peterson said he is grateful for the opportunity to join the OVA, and that there will be no need to "reinvent the wheel" as far as helping veterans is concerned. "I'm very excited for the opportunity to be the first VBA personnel in the CNMI, and I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this effort with the assistance of state leaders. I look forward to making sure that those that are eligible for benefits here file for those claims, and get resolutions to those claims in a timely manner. That's the most important mission for me right now," said Peterson.

Willie Peterson III, legal administrative specialist for the Veterans Benefits Administration under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, is reportedly the CNMI's first accredited and permanent Veterans Benefits counselor. JOSHUA SANTOS

"The VBA has targeted metrics that we use to make sure that we're servicing veteran communities, so we're not going to reinvent the wheel. All we're going to do is implement here what [the VBA] has been doing across the country," he added.

Peterson has been working for the VBA for 10 years, with the last two years spent helping veterans in Hawaii. At that time, Peterson worked one year at the Honolulu Regional Office of Veterans Affairs and another year in Maui, where he helped veterans in the Maui County area.

On Mondays (excluding federal holidays), the Saipan VA Clinic in the Marina Heights II building in suites 100 and 206 accepts appointments from 8am to 4pm. The clinic can be called at 322-0035.

From Tuesday through Friday (excluding federal holidays), the OVA located at 1264 Anatahan Drive on Capital Hill accepts appointments from 8am to 4pm. The office can be called at 664-2650, 664-2651, and 664-2652.

At both the clinic and the OVA, appointments are required.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 501370
SAIPAN, MP 96950

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Seventeenth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. at the Sinapalo Elementary School Cafeteria, Sinapalo, Rota, via teleconference at http://meet.google.com/hqf-xiqf-bxk.

AGENDA [1]

I. Swearing in of the Student Representative

II. Preliminary
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes
   a. April 9, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
   b. May 7, 2021 Special Board Meeting
   c. May 21, 2021 Special Board Meeting
   d. July 8, 2021 Special Board Meeting
   e. August 6, 2021 Special Board Meeting
   f. September 1, 2021 Special Board Meeting

III. Public Comments [2]

IV. Reports
1. Chair's Report
2. Committee Reports
   a. CIP
   b. FPA
   c. ISA
   d. LIA
   e. SICPP
   f. SARC
3. Commissioner of Education
   a. Financial Status Reports
      i. Federal
      ii. Local
   b. Head Start Program
   c. Others

V. Unfinished Business

VI. New Business
1. Career Pathways Proposal 2021
2. Extracurricular Course Credit Application 2021
3. CNMI PSS SY2021 Assessment Results
4. End of Year/Course Assessment Proposal
5. District Student Information System Proposal
6. IT&DE Instructional Technology Appropriate Use Proposed Regulation
7. IT&DE Online Learning Policy Proposal
8. PSS Organizational Chart – Merger of ITDE & SIT
9. Proclamation: Bullying and Violence Prevention Month
10. Head Start Program matters:
    a. Proclamation: Head Start Awareness Month
    b. Head Start ARPA Budget Revision Request
11. Internal Auditor JVA
12. 2nd Incentive Pay
13. Certification & Licensure Matters
    a. CLO Report No. 2021-17-08

VII. Executive Session [3]
1. Legal Updates
2. Personnel
3. Other matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] In the event that the items on the agenda are not completed, the meeting will recess and reconvene on the following day or at the most expeditious date and time determined by the Board.
[2] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments
[3] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
P.O. BOX 500861 CK
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-3200/1
FAX: (670) 664-3237
info@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Special Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.** in the MVA Conference Room, Saipan MP 96950

MEETING AGENDA

1) Preliminary Matters
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda
2) Public Comments
3) Committee Reports
   a. Finance Committee
      i. Fund Status Report
         1. Reprogramming of Funds
      ii. CNMI Tourism Resumption Investment Plan (TRIP) Korea
         1. Hybrid Quarantine Facility
4) New Business
   a. Tirow Thursdays
   b. Self-care Leave
   c. Within Grade Increase
   d. Managers' Salary Increase
   e. Merit Bonus Award Program
5) Old Business
   a. Municipalities (No Cost MOU Extensions)
      i. Tinian
   b. MVA-ITB-21-2040: Acquisition of Riding Mowers for MVA Tinian and MVA Rota
6) Executive Session
7) Miscellaneous/Announcements
8) Adjournment

/s/ Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2021-019

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 25, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Vehicle Lease of 2-Pick-up Trucks for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program on Tinian and Rota

Bid information and packet is available on September 23, 2021, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670) 234-9021, on or before September 28, 2021, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman, NMHC Board of Directors

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
FOR FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDITS FOR FY 2021 AND 2022
MPLT RFP 21-01

The Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) is soliciting Request for Proposal (RFP) for Financial and Compliance Audit for MPLT for fiscal years 2021 and 2022. Copy of the RFP is available @ www.mplt.gov.mp or may be pick-up at MPLT, 1222 Capital Hill Road, Saipan, MP 96950.

Office Hours: 8:00am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday

Contact Barbara Reyes at (670) 322-4401/4402 or email: mplt@mplt.gov.mp for more information.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:
4:00 P.M., Friday, September 30, 2021

PLACE:
Marianas Public Land Trust
P.O. Box 501089
1222 Capital Hill Road
Saipan, MP 96950

The MPLT reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in a proposal if doing so is in the Trust best interest. All proposals shall become the property of MPLT.

IPI urges public to stay away from construction site, cranes

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With tropical storm condition being declared last week, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC strongly urged the public to stay away from IPI's casino/resort construction site in western Garapan, especially near the tower cranes before the all-clear was declared.

In an earlier statement, IPI said it stepped up the monitoring of the cranes at the construction site due to the ongoing tropical depression.

"We appreciate your attention. We will continue closely monitor the situation and keep the public informed," said IPI in its public announcement.

Saipan Tribune learned Thursday last week that IPI has yet to remove or secure any of the three cranes.

Last Aug. 27, *Saipan Tribune* published a story about U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona's order authorizing IPI to do whatever is necessary to secure the cranes.

Manglona, however, ordered IPI that aside from securing the cranes, they are not allowed to do any construction activity pursuant to the stop-order imposed in a lawsuit filed by U.S. Labor against IPI.

IPI has been allowed to delay its September 2021 payment to U.S. Labor so it can undertake safety work at its construction site to secure the cranes.

Last July 29, the Commonwealth Casino Commission commissioners expressed concern about the imminent danger the three tower cranes at the site pose to business establishments and people in western Garapan during this typhoon season, with no ongoing construction at the project's site.

That fear was further heightened when IPI construction site manager Jesse Aquiningoc told CCC board members during the board meeting that he believes that, if not repaired immediately, Tower Crane No. 6 that is facing the beach may start to collapse in three months.

Guam appeals ruling striking down abortion restriction

HONOLULU (AP)—Guam's government is appealing a judge's ruling that removed a barrier to women in the U.S. territory accessing telemedicine abortions.

American Civil Liberties Union attorneys fighting for abortion access on Guam said the appeal is alarming because it comes as the island is grappling with the deadliest wave of the pandemic.

The Guam attorney general's office and the Guam Medical Board of Examiners filed notice in court this week they are appealing a preliminary injunction that temporarily blocked a provision of Guam law that forced patients to have an in-person visit before abortion medication can be prescribed via telemedicine.

The September ruling stemmed from a lawsuit by two Guam-licensed physicians who live in Hawaii and want to remotely supply medication abortions to Guam patients through telemedicine. They took issue with the requirement that information about the procedure be given to patients in person.

In March, both sides agreed to a settlement that made medication abortion via telemedicine accessible. The settlement cleared the way for Guam residents to access telemedicine abortion rather than leave the island and fly nearly 4,000 miles (6,437 kilometers) to Hawaii, or farther.

"If the appeal prevails, it wouldn't change the legality of medication abortion through telemedicine on Guam," ACLU attorney Alexa Kolbi-Molinas said Thursday.

But it could be an obstacle on an island where abortion continues to be a contentious issue and where there's already limited abortion resources.

Abortions carry a strong stigma in the heavily Catholic territory.

The last abortion physician on Guam retired in 2018 and no local doctor has stepped in to fill the vacancy, U.S. Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood noted in her ruling.

While the appeal is pending, Hawaii doctors will be able to provide telehealth abortions, Kolbi-Molinas said.

Attorneys representing Guam officials didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
MVA IS HIRING!!!

JVA #	VACANT POSITION	OPENING DATE 9/14/2021	CLOSING DATE 9/28/2021
JVA#21-004:	ACCOUNTANT IV (SAIPAN)		
JVA#21-005:	TOUR GUIDE CERTIFICATION MANAGER (SAIPAN)		
JVA#21-006:	TRADES TECHNICIAN I (TINIAN) (3 POSITIONS)		
JVA #	VACANT POSITION	OPENING DATE 9/15/2021	CLOSING DATE 9/29/2021
JVA#21-007:	GRAPHIC ARTIST (SAIPAN)		

INTERESTED PERSONS MAY CONTACT THE MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICE AT (670) 664-3200/01 OR VISIT WWW.MYMARIANAS.COM/ANNOUNCEMENTS/ FOR MORE DETAILS.

NEW WAVE DENTAL

Dental Assistant Needed
New (Full-Time)
*applicants with lab skills preferred

$15-25/hr. call 233-3300 for info, or drop off CV at New Wave Dental

Faith, Hope and KARIDAT

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

FAMILY SERVICES CASE MANAGER

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: Complete application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021 AT 4:00 PM

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com •
Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2021

Opening date: September 20, 2021 Closing date: October 08, 2021

Positions: (1) Receptionist/Secretary (Saipan)
(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I (CPA Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 08, 2021.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

NMPASI
NORTHERN MARIANAS PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS, INC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is soliciting proposals for Single Audit of financial and compliance audit for fiscal year ending **September 30, 2021**. NMPASI is designated, federally funded protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in the CNMI. NMPASI uses a variety of individual and systems advocacy approaches to protect people's rights, including legal and administrative remedies, legislative, policy change and trainings. Proposals for the financial and compliance audit shall be submitted to NMPASI, P.O. Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than December 3, 2021. The audit shall be performed in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards;
2. OMB Circular A-133; and
3. Compliance with the general Requirements Applicable to Federal Financial Assistance Program.

Award will be based on specific factor such as prior experience, technical competence, ability to meet the deadline and price in this order. The contract for this audit will be awarded no later than **December 20, 2021**, and a final audit report shall be completed by **March 15, 2022.** A list of specific audit requirements and Agency's profile are available at NMPASI office, Gualo Rai. Any questions regarding this matter can be addressed to Mr. James Rayphand, Executive Director

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A flood of words: How New York leaders should respond to a warming planet and extreme weather

As President Biden toured the sites of calamitous flooding in New York and New Jersey, flanked by every imaginable local elected official, he had plenty to say about climate change. That it is here, that it is awful, and that we must do our part to stop it from worsening. Having seen many parts of our city get soaked by Superstorm Sandy nine years ago, then helplessly watching the remnants of Hurricane Ida drown much of the rest of the five boroughs, we agree.

Yet, even assuming Congress does what is right and smart and passes Biden's infrastructure plans, embracing cleaner power sources that belch less carbon into the air, developing nations will continue to develop. An energy-hungry, increasingly prosperous populace will demand being kept cool, and warm, and entertained, and traveling from point A to point Z. Climate change can and must be slowed, but there's no realistic scenario in which, on a growing planet, it can be reversed.

Which is why the top priority of local leaders in a coastal city like New York must be to waste no time in engineering ourselves into a more resilient future. That means speeding the development of massive infrastructure projects like the sea walls that constitute the "The Big U," designed to hold back the waves when the oceans rise and storms surge.

It means greatly increasing drainage capacity below ground by modernizing our sewers, and above ground investing in hundreds of smaller-scale projects to absorb water.

It means developing more sophisticated projections of the places susceptible to the worst flooding—and either mitigating that risk, or banning development in those areas altogether.

If climate change is here, the challenge for politicians on the ground in New York is to walk and chew gum. The gum-chewing, which might be satisfying but won't save lives or livelihoods in the near term, is to rail against climate change and try moving the larger needle. The walking, which matters mightily, is assuming climate change will happen and preparing accordingly.

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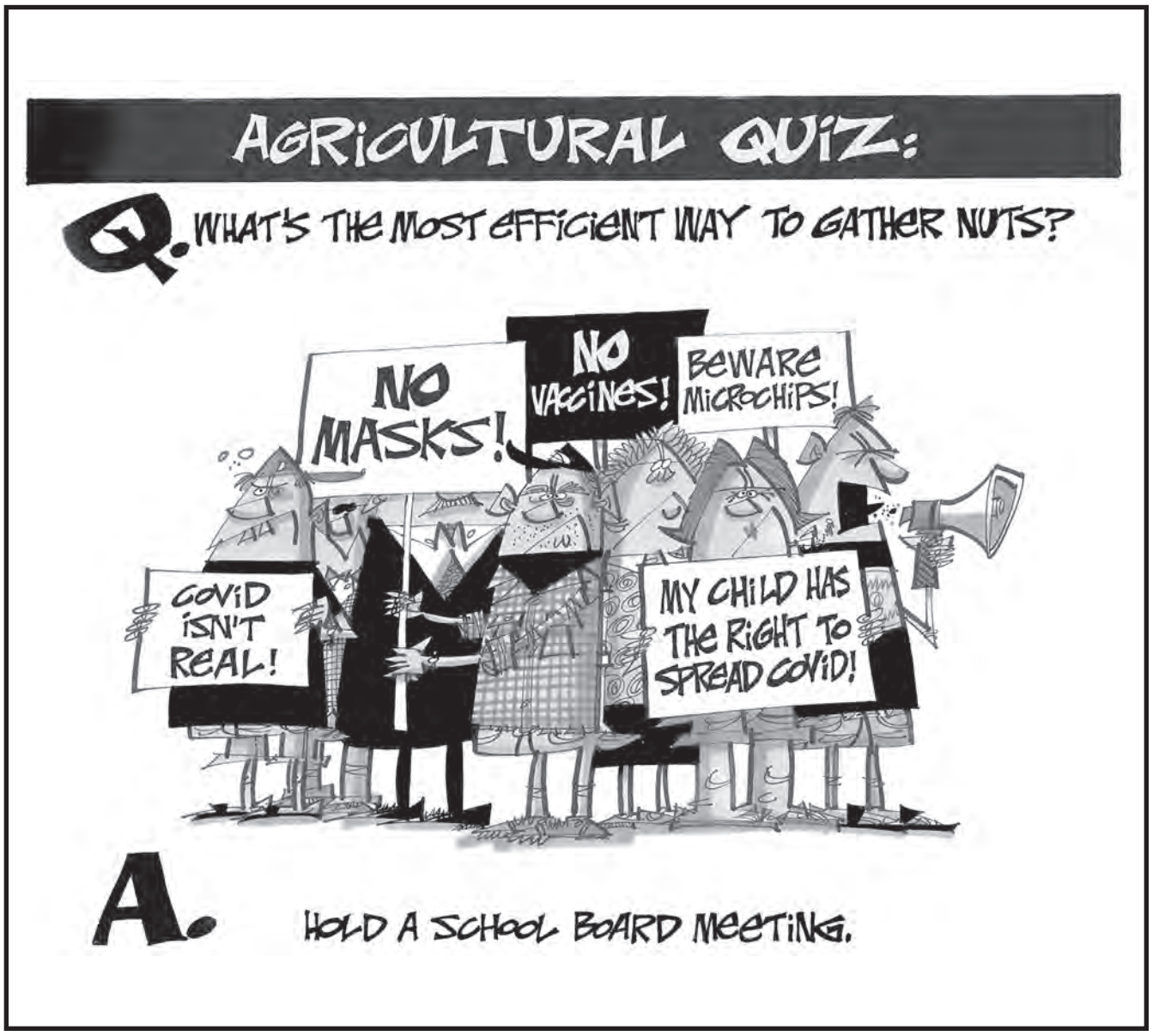

AGRICULTURAL QUIZ:
Q. WHAT'S THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO GATHER NUTS?
NO MASKS!
NO VACCINES!
BEWARE MICROCHIPS!
COVID ISN'T REAL!
MY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO SPREAD COVID!
A. HOLD A SCHOOL BOARD MEETING.

We need civic soul

By BRIAN RUBIN
The Fulcrum

Brian Rubin is an alumnus of the Bridge Alliance Leaders Mastermind Cohort. He is founder and principal of Bstory, an initiative that uses the power of collective story to breathe new life into our civic and moral imaginations.

There exists something transcendent in the best of what the African American experience has to offer. It is reflected in the many cultural contributions made throughout American history. Africans brought to America have had a profound influence on the American civic landscape. I use "soul" as a metaphor to describe this sense of awareness. It can be heard in the music, from spirituals to hip-hop, and it strives to raise the consciousness of this nation.

When one encounters life from the underside of our society, it fashions a sensitivity to the political, social and economic inequities that exist. When people say that change happens at the margins, they are pointing to a certain set of circumstances that lead to the very essence of a solution. These life lessons are not found in ivory towers. To view life through a soul lens is to intuitively view problems from a different vantage point.

Too many fail to know her name, but we need more voices like that of Fannie Lou Hamer. While criticized for not being the most articulate, Hamer summoned a power to speak in a way that demanded attention. Hamer had a way of truth-telling and we need more people who will ask questions in the best interest of all, as she did at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. She asked, "Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings?" Basic human dignity is an appropriate starting point, but unfortunately COVID-19 and the frequent recordings of police brutality have only exposed the gaps that many were already aware of.

Reflecting on the state of things during the early part of the pandemic, columnist David Brooks wrote, "Everywhere I hear the same refrain: We're standing at a portal to the future; we're not going back to how it used to be." I do not know if our visions are the same, but like Brooks I can see possibilities of alternate futures.

I know that many would like to return to "normal" because they are only prepared to weather things that are predictable and it causes us to avoid what cannot be measured. I get it, risk is scary while business as usual is tangible and safe.

However, like James Baldwin said, "I do believe, I really do believe in the New Jerusalem, I really do believe that we can all become better than we are. I know we can. But the price is enormous."

The possibilities that I see ahead require more than simply reform, but a complete reorientation of values. We must come to a point when we move past the idea of American exceptionalism that Princeton professor Eddie Glaude Jr. calls "a lie that hollows out the nation's soul and leaves its democracy flawed and threatened." Too often we are grounded in a nostalgic remembrance of a past that never existed. There is much work to be done.

I was inspired by a question posed by the Rev. Andrew Wilkes. He authored the book "Freedom Notes: Reflections on Faith, Justice and the Possibility of Democracy," which at its core is an exploration of how we get free. The question he asks us is, "What if all of us—not just politicians—are elected for public service?"

It is much easier to look to Washington to be the Change That We Can Believe In, or to Make America Great Again, but at some point there must be a groundswell of citizens who do not bow down and worship at an altar of exceptionalism or any claim of supremacy. Rather, we must tear down every false idol and replace them with visions that carry possibilities that awaken our imaginations and gives voice to the voiceless as we consider this present moment and beyond.

In his posthumous op-ed in *The New York Times*, the late Rep. John Lewis wrote, "Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble." Therefore, I am excited to share this column with you. Beyond all the analysis, change starts with our collective individual beliefs and actions. As we journey together in civic soul, let us do it toward casting a vision that will redeem the soul of America.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Pentagon gas stations and fuel: An overlooked necessity for war at sea?

RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs *at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.*

The U.S. Navy may or may not have the resources to keep fuel, food, and materiel flowing in ways and at levels that provide uninterrupted direct support for other U.S. Navy vessels at war, should a long term at sea battle take place between America and China. This claim is fundamentally predicated and based on the notion of distance, vast distances, and the absolute tyranny of distance facing the U.S. Navy, when a future hot war breaks out at sea near China. Logistical challenges at sea will quickly mount and may end up being insurmountable for the U.S. Navy in a drawn out at-sea war scenario.

The American empire is founded on having a strong military. The ability of the United States to properly prepare for worst-case contingencies in the Deep Blue Continent near China may simply not be realistic or adequate.

If a hot war breaks out at sea near Taiwan for example, the Navy doesn't have the needed numbers of ships to maintain a constant supply of fuel. If ships run out of gas, food and materiel, a war at sea cannot be fought and won by the United States.

If fuel becomes a major restraining factor, other Navy vessels that support key battle force ships may experience conditions that may make it even harder to sustain a fight against China. Not having enough support in the form of adequate numbers of ships, the overall ability to anticipate and address all needs of sailors in the fight, and the need to plan for the unplanned, may foretell what will occur offshore of Taiwan should the Chinese government decide to attack Taiwan, provoking a response from the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

Cooperation from allied militaries throughout Asia may also not be adequate to achieve stated and desired U.S. military outcomes in part because China is a very strong nation in Asia that has tremendous leverage to shape and influence the behaviors of many political leaders throughout the region.

At-sea questions persist

How will sailors be properly treated for medical care in a fight, if the Navy only has a few hospital ships operating worldwide? How will the Navy manage to tow damaged vessels away from the combat zone area in a quick and effective manner, if at all? How will maintenance work be performed during a major conflict as ship maintenance problems arise? How will ammunition, and weapons be resupplied to warships doing the actual fighting? How will the U.S. Navy perform operations that focus on protecting American flagged commercial shipping interests doing business throughout the western Pacific and Asiatic regions?

How will the Marine Corps maintain its operations if fuel, food supplies, and maintenance support runs out? Can a military fight undertaken by the Marines be sustained at sea without fuel despite widely distributed force laydowns? How will fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial systems be maintained if jet fuel supplies run out?

How will the Marianas Islands be affected?

Guam and the Northern Marianas will be greatly affected if a hot war breaks out in the region, using Taiwan as an example. Guam is a key fuel outpost for America's military aircraft inventories because Andersen Air Force Base is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive gas stations, fueling U.S. and allied military aircraft and select civilian aircraft.

Fuel supplies for the Navy and Marine Corps, however, appear to be a much more complicated logistical and expense item problem should a hot war break out at sea near Taiwan.

No matter how many Marines come to Guam to train or to be permanently stationed, unless there are gas supplies readily available to use and resupply naval forces and Marines for war near China, these sea-based organizations will not be able to fully execute stated mission sets that are tied to directly supporting naval operations in a fight for Taiwan.

If the Navy loses its ability to maintain a constant and adequate fuel supply for a hot fight over Taiwan, what may happen to fuel supplies that are imported into Guam and the Northern Marianas? Just how difficult will it be to obtain fuel if a hot war ensues between the United States and China in the Taiwan Strait? How will sea-based fuel shipments originating from the Middle East headed for the Marianas Islands be impacted? Is our Marianas Island chain ready to experience a total shutdown of fuel supplies today, 90 days from now, or 120 days from now?

Has China already figured it out?

China may have already figured out that to win a hot war against the United States in its near seas' region, it simply needs to be successful at stopping the United States from being able to resupply itself at sea during a hot war over Taiwan.

The Chinese Navy can engage in a game of blocking American military ships by using hundreds of auxiliary and civilian vessels that transit the near seas' regions. The sheer number of Chinese vessels may be easily able to disrupt, harass and slow down, if not stop, both resupply chains needed to support the American Navy effort to fight, or unleash hundreds of mines onto the ocean's surface and below the surface areas, to produce a deadly environment for American ships and sailors.

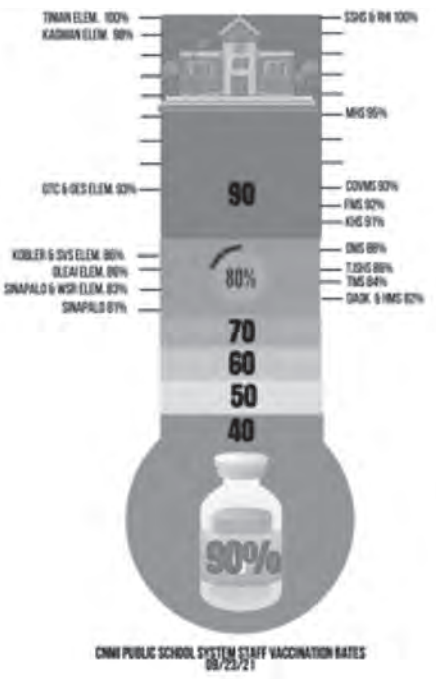
A hot war in the region will create a host of risks that could potentially result in the delay or near-term total disruption of oil shipments headed to Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands originating from the Middle East, via commercial sea lanes. The first, second and third order consequences of a future hot war against China concerning Taiwan are daunting and will have a tremendous impact on our Chamorro people and Marianas Islands chain.

Open message to all parents and guardians

By ROB HARRELL and TINA GOODWIN
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

VACCINATE, VACCINATE, VACCINATE is the word of the year, with the CNMI at over 81% fully vaccinated. Do you then wonder why our middle and high schools are going to school for two or three days a week?

The repercussions of policy and procedures, which have protected our islands, have greatly affected our children's education. Each parent, guardian, and family member can do something to change this. As Parent Advisory Committee members, we are reaching out to all public-school parents and legal guardians so we, as a community, can collectively get our children back to full face-to-face, in-person learning sessions five days a week in all PSS schools.



The PSS and CNMI Task Force have been working day and night to keep us safe from the coronavirus, while finding alternatives to educating our kids. Currently the public middle schools and high schools have not returned to school at full capacity because the COVID-19 Task Force requires *all eligible persons* ***at each school*** *to be vaccinated and reach at least 80% of the total school population*. The teachers and administrators of these schools have met or exceeded 80%.

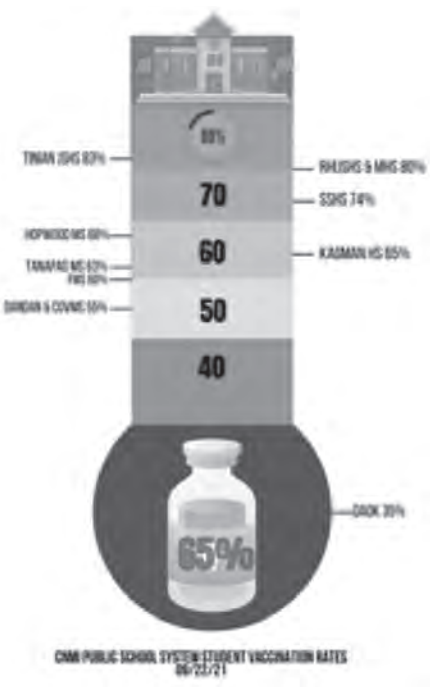
Now is the time to ensure our eligible 12- to 17-year-old students obtain the same 80% vaccination rate. The current student population eligible for the vaccine by school is between 35% to 83%. Here's data from Sept. 22.

Schools have given students health forms to get your approval to only collect data on your child/children COVID vaccination. This will give PSS staff an accurate measure of our total vaccination rates. If your student(s) has/have not brought home any forms, please contact your school administration office.

There are three things that PSS urgently needs to return to normal school hours.

First, sign the necessary documents for information sharing of COVID vaccination information between PSS and CHCC. Permission forms are available at all school administration offices.

Second, sign the permission form allowing your student to be COVID tested. Our community is fortunate enough to have free access to rapid COVID tests, unlike many U.S. cities. PSS, along with the COVID-19 Task Force, would like to regularly test the entire school population to ensure the community that there is no coronavirus at the schools. The test uses the Abbott Binax rapid test. This nasal test is painless and is a gentle swab of only the nasal cavity, unlike the PCR test, which goes into the sinus cavity. If your child can put a cotton swab, a toy or a Cheerio in their nose, then they should have no fear of this test.



Third, and *most important*, vaccinate your eligible 12- to 17-year-old child/children.

We, as parents and guardians, have a responsibility not only to our children, but to those who take care of them in our public schools. It takes a village and we must share responsibility in getting all 12- to 17-year-old students vaccinated. The administration and teachers have done their part… now it is our turn!!!

There are many outreach programs to help with transportation and to assist in any other obstacles your family may have. Be sure to sign the consent form for vaccinating if you are not accompanying your 12- to 17-year-old child/children to the vaccination site. Call for assistance at 287-1089.

Children need full face-to-face in-person education or they will continue to fall behind in their knowledge and growth. Their future is at risk! Reading, mathematics, and sports, which have been stepping stones to receiving scholarships, federal programs and funding, have been potentially unavailable for two years. As parents, we can remember our own clubs, social events, interacting with friends and making new ones when we were students. Our children will miss out on those experiences and opportunities. It is now time, as it has been for generations before us, to stand up! Protect our children and ensure they get the best education and opportunities available in our PSS.

Together, let's make this happen.

Si yuus maase.

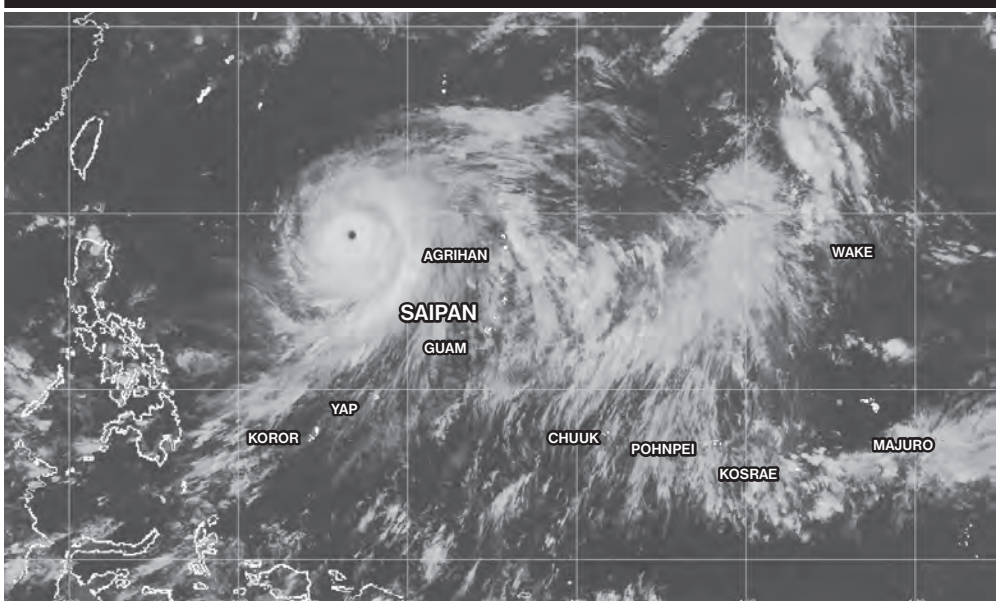
Rob Harrell is president of the Parents Advisory Council to the Commissioner of Education. Tina Goodwin is president of Marianas High School's Parents Teachers Students Association.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. southeast to south winds 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds around 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
88° 77°	88° 77°	88° 77°	87° 78°	87° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:53 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly sunny skies and just isolated showers moving through the Marianas Waters. The Ipan buoy reveals a 2 to 3 foot east swell, out of combined seas that are between 4 and 5 feet. Most of the balance is a 3 to 4 foot southwest swell, which the Ipan buoy is largely sheltered from.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Heavy rain	82 / 87 °F
Palau	Mostly cloudy	82 / 87 °F
Yap	Strong thunderstorms	81 / 92 °F
Chuuk	Strong thunderstorms	80 / 89 °F
Pohnpei	Partly sunny	77 / 88 °F
Kosrae	Morning clouds	84 / 89 °F
Majuro	Partly cloudy	84 / 88 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:09 PM
Tuesday	6:06 AM	6:08 PM
Wednesday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:06 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:00 AM	10:29 PM
Tuesday	-	11:52 AM	11:16 PM
Wednesday	-	12:43 PM	-
Thursday	12:07 AM	1:34 PM	-
Friday	1:00 AM	2:24 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly cloudy	54 / 63 °F
Beijing	Morning clouds	60 / 87 °F
Hong Kong	Morning clouds	79 / 91 °F
Honolulu	Mostly sunny	74 / 83 °F
London	Partly cloudy	68 / 85 °F
Los Angeles	Morning clouds	57 / 72 °F
Manila	Partly sunny	80 / 87 °F
Melbourne	Mostly cloudy	50 / 57 °F
Miami	Partly cloudy	81 / 88 °F
New York	Mostly sunny	70 / 87 °F
Osaka	Mostly cloudy	71 / 80 °F
Paris	Partly cloudy	68 / 87 °F
Pusan	Partly cloudy	68 / 77 °F
Rome	Partly cloudy	61 / 85 °F
Salem	Sunny	45 / 81 °F
San Francisco	Morning clouds	57 / 67 °F
Seoul	Morning clouds	63 / 84 °F
Tokyo	Mostly cloudy	71 / 78 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly sunny	69 / 90 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:25 AM	Low Tide	0.21
12:36 PM	High Tide	1.58
5:59 PM	Low Tide	1.19
10:36 PM	High Tide	1.53

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:45am	7:25am	1, 3, 6
UA117	9:45am	10:25am	2, 4, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:05pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:45am	9:10pm	1, 3, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	9:10pm	4, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	3
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:00am	5:41am	1, 3, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:41am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	3:55am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:41am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	5:41am+1	7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:41am+1	1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	3
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

UOG student discovers new algae species in Micronesia

Britney Sison, an undergraduate biology and chemistry student at the University of Guam, has discovered five potentially undocumented diatoms in mud samples from the Micronesian Islands of Palau, Yap, Pohnpei, and the Marshall Islands. Her discoveries are in addition to two potentially new diatom species found earlier this year by UOG student Gabriella Prelosky.

Sison

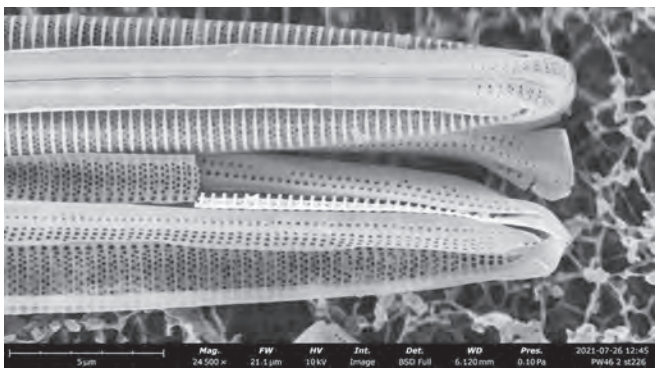
Diatoms are single-celled algae found in oceans, lakes, and rivers. They are primary producers in the food chain as photosynthetic organisms, according to UOG professor emeritus of Biology Christopher Lobban, who mentors Sison and Prelosky and runs the Microscopy Teaching & Research Laboratory on the UOG campus.

Sison's discovery happened during her research fellowship under the NSF INCLUDES: SEAS Islands Alliance program, a $10 million initiative funded by the National Science Foundation to broaden participation in STEM fields of students in U.S. territories and affiliated islands.

Award-winning poster presentation

She presented on her findings at the 26th International Diatom Symposium, which brought together hundreds of diatom researchers from around the world for the virtual event from Aug. 23 to 25 out of Yamagata, Japan. Her presentation, titled "New species of conopeate *Nitzschia* in the Pacific Islands," won third place in the student poster competition.

The species Sison focused on in her presentation were just five of many potentially new species of diatoms she found while examining microbial mat and mud samples.



This potentially new diatom species discovered by University of Guam student Britney Sison will be named *Nitzschia biseriata* in reference to the double rows of pores on its body. The species will be officially considered new once a paper about the diatom has been peer-reviewed and approved for publication.
GUAM NSF EPSCOR AND CHRISTOPHER LOBBAN

Britney Sison, left, and Gabriella Prelosky collect mud samples at Achang Bay mangrove in Guam with their research mentor, University of Guam professor emeritus of Biology Christopher Lobban. Both have discovered potentially new species while working as student research fellows under the NSF INCLUDES: SEAS Islands Alliance, a program administered at UOG through the Center for Island Sustainability and the Sea Grant program. MARIA SCHEFTER

Diatom samples from Palau, Yap, Pohnpei, and the Marshall Islands were collected and mailed to the UOG lab by interns in the 2021 NSF INCLUDES Bridge-to-Bachelor's summer program: Kebang Ngiraklang, a student at the Palau Community College under the mentorship of Vernice Yuki, and Iverson Aliven and Marlin Lee Ling, from the College of Micronesia-FSM under the mentorship of Brian Lynch.

Using the laboratory's new scanning electron microscope, which was funded by the university's Guam NSF EPSCoR grant, Sison and Lobban were able to examine the samples intensively.

Marlin Lee Ling, a student intern of the NSF INCLUDES Bridge-to-Bachelor's summer program through the College of Micronesia-FSM, photographs a mud sample next to the mangrove he collected it from in Pohnpei.
MARTIN LEE LIN/GUAM NSF EPSCOR

"It's been really interesting to study diatoms," Sison said. "In the words of Dr. Lobban, it's like an adult treasure hunt. You never know what you'll find."

Naming the new species

Sison is now in the process of naming the potentially new species. One of them will be named *Nitzschia biseriata* because of its unique characteristic of having double rows of pores on its body instead of one.

"'Two rows' translated into Latin is 'biseriate,'" Lobban said. "If there's an obvious characteristic like that, it's useful to name it that way because then it will tell people something about the species."

Sison's findings will officially be new species once a paper about the diatoms has been peer-reviewed and approved for publication.

Both Sison and Prelosky will present more complete results of their research at the 2021 National Diversity in STEM Digital Conference held by the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science on Oct. 25–29.

The NSF INCLUDES: SEAS Islands Alliance is administered by the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant programs in partnership with the School of Education at the University of Guam. UOG faculty members Austin Shelton, Cheryl Sangueza, and Else Demeulenaere serve as investigators of the grant award. NSF INCLUDES collaborates closely with the Guam NSF EPSCoR program, also funded by the National Science Foundation. ***(UOG)***

Woman, 57, sentenced to eight years in prison for stealing $3.6M-plus from employer, friends

HAGATÑA, Guam—Teresa Adamos Pereda, 57, from Barrigada, Guam, was sentenced in the U.S. District Court of Guam in connection with two separate fraudulent schemes. Pereda pleaded guilty on Jan. 31, 2020, to multiple counts of bank fraud, and on April 14, 2021, to multiple counts of wire fraud and one count of unlawful use of seals of U.S. departments or agencies.

According to a news release last week from the office of Shawn N. Anderson, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. District Judge John C. Coughenour sentenced Pereda to a 60- month term of imprisonment, to run concurrent to a 96-month term of imprisonment and five years of supervised release.

Coughenour also ordered Pereda to pay $1,150,430 restitution to her former employer, an additional $2,527,838 restitution to other multiple victims, forfeiture money judgments of $1,150,430 and $2,527,838, and $3,500 special assessment fees, and to forfeit personal property.

Pereda was employed as an office manager at the dental clinic of Robert R. Gatewood D.D.S. M.S.. From January 2011 until her termination in September 2019, she stole $1,150,430 from her employer by writing 284 fraudulent checks from her employer's First Hawaiian Bank checking account for her personal use. To conceal the embezzlement scheme from her employer and First Hawaiian Bank, Pereda falsified check stubs to make it appear the checks were issued for business purposes, and falsely recorded the transactions in the company's internal accounting system.

In a separate case, from January 2016 to November 2019, Pereda participated in an advance fee inheritance scheme and defrauded at least 36 victims, including family, friends, co-workers and members of the St. Paul Christian Church and St. Paul Christian School alumni. She obtained $2,527,838 by falsely representing that she expected to receive a multi-million dollar inheritance from an elderly couple from Hawaii, but had to pay taxes, attorney's fees, and other expenses up front before she could receive the funds. Pereda convinced the victims to give her money to pay for such inheritance-related and other expenses and assured them she would repay them a larger sum of money from her inheritance. Pereda knew these claims were false at the time she made them. She also knew that no inheritance was forthcoming from an elderly couple in Hawaii. In addition, Pereda provided some victims with bogus documents and seals from various U.S. government agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency. Pereda sent over $2.5 million of investor funds via wire transfer to other co-schemers in the United States and foreign countries.

"The significant sentence in this case reflects the extraordinary losses suffered by numerous victims," stated Anderson. "In addition to a lengthy term of imprisonment, our prosecution of Pereda has deprived her of all proceeds from her criminal activity. It is noteworthy that the FBI pursued this matter across multiple jurisdictions over the course of the ongoing pandemic. We are thankful for their exceptional dedication to keeping our communities safe."

"Pereda preyed upon the trust she gained with her employer, community, church, friends and family and defrauded them of their hard-earned money and retirement savings," said Steven Merrill, special agent in charge of the FBI's Honolulu Field Office. "She caused the loss of millions of dollars by repeatedly lying that the payoff would come if her victims just gave more money. The FBI is committed to investigating investment scams and I urge the people of Guam to be wary of any offers that sound 'too good to be true.'"

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prosecuted by Marivic David, assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Guam. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

USCIS extends flexibility for responding to agency requests

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending the flexibilities it announced on March 30, 2020, to assist applicants, petitioners and requestors who are responding to certain:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Rescind;
- Notices of Intent to Terminate regional centers; and
- Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant.

In addition, USCIS will consider a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA), if:

- The form was filed up to 60 calendar days from the issuance of a decision we made; and
- We made that decision anytime from March 1, 2020, through Jan. 15, 2022

Notice/request/decision issuance date

This flexibility applies to the above documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision is between March 1, 2020, and Jan. 15, 2022, inclusive.

Response due date

USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking any action. Additionally, we will consider a Form N-336 or Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision before we take any action. ***(USCIS)***

2 Saipan students named to SHU's spring dean's list

SOUTH ORANGE, NJ—Two Saipan-born students have qualified for the spring 2021 dean's list at the Seton Hall University in New Jersey.

In a press statement last week, Seton Hall University congratulated Sally Lai and Ryan Christian Relucio, both from Saipan, for their outstanding academic achievements.

One of the country's leading Catholic universities, Seton Hall University is home to nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and offers more than 80 majors. Seton Hall's academic excellence has been singled out for distinction by The Princeton Review, US News & World Report and Bloomberg BusinessWeek. Its main campus is located in suburban South Orange, New Jersey, and is only 14 miles by train, bus or car to New York City. For more information, visit www.shu.edu. ***(PR)***

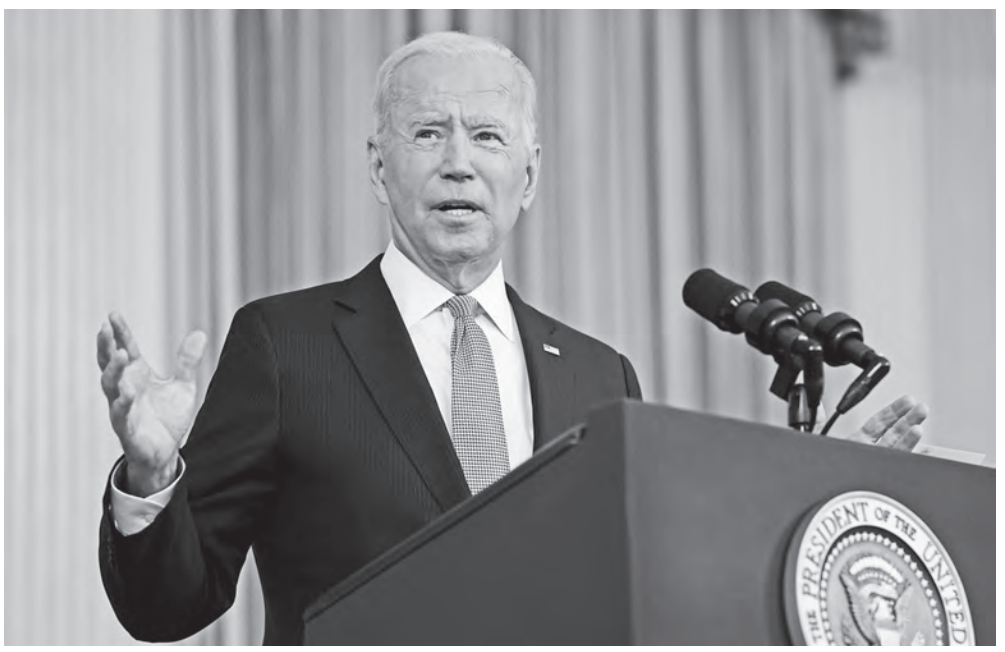
Business

Newsweek names BOH best big bank in Hawaii

HONOLULU, Hawaii—Bank of Hawaii has been named Best Big Bank in Hawaii in *Newsweek*'s America's Best Banks 2022 rankings.

Newsweek partnered with LendingTree, the online marketplace and comparison site for financial services, for its second annual Best Banks rankings. The Best Big Bank in each state needed to have at least one branch per 100,000 residents and at least $10 billion in assets.

"This accomplishment would not be possible without the continued dedication of our more than 2,000 Bankoh teammates who have gone above and beyond to serve our customers, especially through the challenging times brought on by the pandemic," said Bank of Hawaii chairman, president and CEO Peter Ho. "Our digital products and enhancements make it convenient for customers to bank remotely and stay connected to their finances while our branch teammates provide a personal level of engagement for our customers." ***(PR)***



President Joe Biden speaks about the COVID-19 response and vaccinations in the State Dining Room of the White House, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, in Washington. AP

Biden: Budget talks hit 'stalemate'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden says that talks over his $3.5 trillion rebuilding plan have hit a "stalemate" in Congress as he made the case for his expansive effort to recast the nation's tax and spending programs and make what he sees as sweeping, overdue investments.

Biden spoke at the White House as Democrats in the House and Senate are laboring to finish drafts and overcome differences between the party's centrist and moderate factions. Despite efforts by the president and congressional leaders to show progress, Biden on Friday cast the road ahead as long and potentially cumbersome, even with upcoming deadlines.

"We're getting down to the hard spot here," Biden told reporters at the White House. "We're at this stalemate at the moment."

Biden said the process is "going to be up and down" but "hopefully at the end of the day I'll be able to deliver on what I said I would do."

The president's acknowledgment of Democrats' disagreements—and they have serious differences over taxes, health, climate change and the ultimate price tag—contrasted with congressional leaders' more upbeat tone in recent days. Using carefully chosen words, top Democrats have seemed to be trying to create a sense of momentum as House votes approach.

On Friday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., predicted passage of both pillars of Biden's domestic agenda. One is a still-evolving $3.5 trillion package of social safety net and climate programs, the other a separate $1 trillion measure financing highway, internet and other infrastructure projects that's already passed the Senate with bipartisan support.

"We're going to pass both bills," she told reporters.

But she did not spell out how she and her Senate counterpart, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., would resolve disagreements and distrust between their party's moderate and progressive wings that's stalled both measures. And there remained confusion about the voting schedule, which will be crucial.

Carnival loses $2.8B but sees solid 2022 bookings

Carnival Corp. lost $2.8 billion in the third quarter, but shares rose Friday after the cruise line operator said bookings for the second half of next year are running ahead of 2019 levels.

Cruising investors are looking for any glimmer of hope for an industry that has been battered by the pandemic.

Still, the short-term outlook remains grim. Carnival said the rise in U.S. COVID-19 cases from the delta variant hurt sales this summer. Rivals Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Line saw the same thing. New reported virus cases are trending slightly lower now.

Carnival said the average ship was only 59% full in August, but that was an improvement from 39% in June, and voyages generated enough revenue to cover cash costs.

"We reported a significant loss, so we haven't recovered yet, obviously, but as we look ahead we see brighter days," CEO Arnold Donald said in an interview. "If things continue to trend the way they are (with COVID-19 cases), we should see positive cash flow as we get our fleet sailing broadly again."

Nation

In this photo provided by Kimberly Fossen an ambulance is parked at the scene of an Amtrak train derailment on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, in north-central Montana. AP

At least 3 dead in Amtrak's train derailment in Montana

JOPLIN, Mont. (AP)—At least three people were killed Saturday afternoon when an Amtrak train that runs between Seattle and Chicago derailed in north-central Montana, toppling several cars onto their sides, authorities said.

The westbound Empire Builder train derailed about 4 p.m. near Joplin, a town of about 200, Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams said in a statement. The accident scene is about 150 miles (241 kilometers) northeast of Helena and about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the border with Canada.

Liberty County sheriff's dispatcher Starr Tyler told The Associated Press that three people died in the derailment. She did not have more details. Amtrak said in a statement that there were multiple injuries.

The train had about 141 passengers and 16 crew members onboard, Abrams said. The train had two locomotives and 10 cars, eight of which derailed, he said.

"We are deeply saddened to learn local authorities are now confirming that three people have lost their lives as a result of this accident," Abrams said.

Megan Vandervest, a passenger who was going to visit a friend in Seattle, told The New York Times that she was awakened by the derailment.

"My first thought was that we were derailing because, to be honest, I have anxiety and I had heard stories about trains derailing," said Vandervest, who is from Minneapolis. "My second thought was that's crazy. We wouldn't be derailing. Like, that doesn't happen."

She told the Times that the car behind hers was tilted, the one behind that was tipped over, and the three cars behind that "had completely fallen off the tracks and were detached from the train."

Speaking from the Liberty County Senior Center, where some passengers were being taken, Vandervest said it felt like "extreme turbulence on a plane."

Residents of communities near the crash site quickly mobilized to help the passengers.

Chester Councilwoman Rachel Ghekiere said she and others helped about 50 to 60 passengers who were brought to a local school.

"I went to the school and assisted with water, food, wiping dirt off faces," she said. "They appeared to be tired, shaken but happy that they were where they were. Some looked more disheveled than others, depending where they were on the train."

A grocery store in Chester, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the derailment, and a nearby religious community provided food, she said.

The passengers were taken by buses to hotels in nearby Shelby, said Ghekiere, whose husband works for the local emergency services agency and was alerted to the crash.

ACROSS THE NATION

4 accused of plotting school attack on Columbine anniversary

DUNMORE, Pa. (AP)—Four teenagers have been charged with a plot to attack a Pennsylvania high school in 2024, on the 25th anniversary of the massacre at Colorado's Columbine High School, authorities said. A 15-year-old girl and 15-year-old boy are charged as adults and two other teenagers face juvenile charges in the plan to attack Dunmore High School, outside Scranton, on April 20, 2024, authorities said. Investigators said the girl's mother told police that her daughter was "obsessed with Columbine," A Molotov cocktail, components for bombs, writings on how to make bombs, and handwritten lists of guns, ammunition and tactical gear complete with prices were found at the girl's home, investigators said in a criminal complaint.

Federal judge delays vaccine mandate for NYC teachers

New York City schools have been temporarily blocked from enforcing a vaccine mandate for its teachers and other workers by a federal appeals judge just days before it was to take effect. Workers in the nation's largest school system were to be required to show vaccination proof starting Monday. But late Friday, a judge for the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals granted a temporary injunction sought by a group of teachers pending review by a three-judge panel, which will take up the motion Wednesday. Department of Education spokesperson Danielle Filson said officials were seeking a speedy resolution in court. "We're confident our vaccine mandate will continue to be upheld once all the facts have been presented, because that is the level of protection our students and staff deserve," Filson said in an email.

Asia

Kim's sister: NKorea willing to talk if Seoul shows respect

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Saturday that her country will take steps to repair ties with South Korea, and may even discuss another summit between their leaders, if the South drops what she described as hostility and double standards.

The comments by Kim Yo Jong followed a similar statement she issued Friday that the North was willing to resume talks with the South if certain conditions were met.

Analysts say North Korea is using South Korean President Moon Jae-in's desire for inter-Korean engagement to pressure Seoul to persuade the Biden administration to ease crippling U.S.-led sanctions over the North's nuclear weapons program or suspend combined U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

In her latest statement, Kim, a senior official who handles inter-Korean affairs, criticized Seoul for describing the North's recent weapons tests as provocations when it's trying to expand its own military capabilities. North Korea has often accused the South of hypocrisy for introducing modern weapons while calling for talks on easing tensions on the divided peninsula.

Kim urged the South to abandon its "unfair double-dealing standards, hostile policies (toward North Korea), various prejudices and hostile comments destroying trust," if it wants the North to respond to its calls to improve ties.

If the Koreas are able to build mutual trust, Kim said North Korea could possibly respond to the South's calls for a declaration to formally end the Korean War, restore an inter-Korean liaison office the North destroyed in 2020, and discuss another summit.

"There is no need for the (North) and the (South) to waste time faulting each other and engaging in a war of words at present," said Kim, adding that the future of bilateral relations depends on the choices the South makes.

"I won't predict here what will come—a balmy breeze or a storm," she said.

Ties between the rivals flourished in 2018, when Moon helped set up Kim Jong Un's first summit with former President Donald Trump. The Korean leaders met three times that year and vowed to resume inter-Korean economic cooperation when possible, expressing optimism that the sanctions would end and allow such projects.

But North Korea later cut off ties with South Korea following the collapse of the second summit between Kim and Trump in 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korea's demand for major sanctions relief in exchange for dismantling an aging nuclear facility. That would have amounted to only a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

Taliban hang body in public display

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban hanged a dead body from a crane parked in a city square in Afghanistan on Saturday in a gruesome display that signaled the hard-line movement's return to some of its brutal tactics of the past.

Taliban officials initially brought four bodies to the central square in the western city of Herat, then moved three of them to other parts of the city for public display, said Wazir Ahmad Seddiqi, who runs a pharmacy on the edge of the square.

Taliban officials announced that the four were caught taking part in a kidnapping earlier Saturday and were killed by police, Seddiqi said. Ziaulhaq Jalali, a Taliban-appointed district police chief in Herat, said later that Taliban members rescued a father and son who had been abducted by four kidnappers after an exchange of gunfire. He said a Taliban fighter and a civilian were wounded by the kidnappers, and that the kidnappers were killed in crossfire.

An Associated Press video showed crowds gathering around the crane and peering up at the body as some men chanted.

"The aim of this action is to alert all criminals that they are not safe," a Taliban commander who did not identify himself told the AP in an on-camera interview conducted in the square.

Since the Taliban overran Kabul on Aug. 15 and seized control of the country, Afghans and the world have been watching to see whether they will re-create their harsh rule of the late 1990s, which included public stonings and limb amputations of alleged criminals, some of which took place in front of large crowds at a stadium.

After one of the Taliban's founders said in an interview with The Associated Press this past week that the hard-line movement would once again carry out executions and amputations of hands, the U.S. State Department said such acts "would constitute clear gross abuses of human rights."

Spokesman Ned Price told reporters Friday at his briefing that the United States would "stand firm with the international community to hold perpetrators of these—of any such abuses—accountable."

The Taliban's leaders remain entrenched in a deeply conservative, hard-line worldview, even if they are embracing technological changes, such as video and mobile phones.

ASIAN BRIEFS

China says all crypto transactions illegal; Bitcoin tumbles

BEIJING (AP)—China's central bank on Friday declared all transactions involving Bitcoin and other virtual currencies illegal, stepping up a campaign to block use of unofficial digital money. Friday's notice complained Bitcoin, Ethereum and other digital currencies disrupt the financial system and are used in money-laundering and other crimes. "Virtual currency derivative transactions are all illegal financial activities and are strictly prohibited," the People's Bank of China said on its website. The price of Bitcoin fell more than 9%, to $41,085, in the hours after the announcement, as did most other crypto tokens. Ethereum skidded almost 10%, falling from $3,100 to around $2,800.

Taiwan opposition chose new leader

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's main opposition Nationalist Party chose former leader Eric Chu as its new chairperson Saturday in an election overshadowed by increasing pressure from neighbor China. Four candidates, including incumbent chair Johnny Chiang, had competed for the leadership of the party that has advocated closer relations with Beijing. That means agreeing to Beijing's demand that it regard Taiwan as a part of China, something Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party has refused to do.

World

Volcanic ash closes La Palma Airport as new vent emerges

MADRID (AP)—The airport on the Spanish island of La Palma shut down Saturday because of an ash cloud spewing out of a volcano that has been erupting for a week, and scientists said another volcanic vent opened up, exposing islanders to possible new dangers.

AP

Residents look from a hill as lava continues to flow from an erupted volcano, on the island of La Palma in the Canaries, Spain, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021.

The intensity of the eruption that began Sept. 19 has increased in recent days, prompting the evacuation of three additional villages on the island, part of Spain's Canary Islands archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean off northwest Africa. Almost 7,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes.

The recent volcanic eruption is the first since 1971 on La Palma, which has a population of 85,000.

La Palma Airport operator Aena said the airport was "inoperative" due to the accumulation of ash. Other airports in the Canary Islands were still operating Saturday but some airlines were suspending flights, Aena said.

Emergency crews pulled back from the volcano Friday as explosions sent molten rock and ash over a wide area. The Canary Islands Volcanology Institute said another vent opened early Saturday.

Rivers of lava have been sliding down the mountainside toward the southwestern coast of the island, destroying everything in their path, including hundreds of homes. The speed of the flow has slowed down considerably, however, and the lava is now barely moving forward, with about 2 kilometers left to reach the sea, said Miguel Ángel Morcuende, head of the Canary Island Volcanic Emergency Plan.

"I don't dare to tell you when it's going to get there, nor do I dare to make a forecast," Morcuende told reporters in a news conference.

WORLD BRIEFS

Israeli troops kill 4 Palestinians in West Bank clashes

JERUSALEM (AP)—At least four Palestinian gunmen were killed in shootouts with Israeli security forces during a sweeping West Bank arrest operation cracking down on the Islamic militant group Hamas on Sunday, the Israeli military said Sunday. It was the deadliest violence between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank in recent weeks and came amid heightened tensions following this year's 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Health Ministry said a Palestinian was shot dead near the northern West Bank city of Jenin and three others were killed in Biddu, north of Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in a statement that Israeli security forces in the West Bank operated against Hamas operatives "that were about to execute terror attacks in the very immediate future."

Closely fought German election ushers in post-Merkel era

BERLIN (AP)—German voters are choosing a new parliament in an election that will determine who succeeds Chancellor Angela Merkel after her 16 years at the helm of Europe's biggest economy. Polls point to a very close race Sunday between Merkel's center-right Union bloc, with state governor Armin Laschet running for chancellor, and the center-left Social Democrats, for whom outgoing finance minister and Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz is seeking the top job. Recent surveys show the Social Democrats marginally ahead. The environmentalist Greens, with candidate Annalena Baerbock, are making their first run for the chancellery, and polls say they are several points behind in third place.

Over 100 officials resign from Tunisia's main Islamist party

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP)—More than 100 officials of Tunisia's Islamist party Ennahdha announced their resignations Saturday to protest the choices of the movement's leadership in confronting the North African country's political crisis. The split within the ranks of Ennahdha comes amid deep political crisis in Tunisia. In July, President Kaïs Saied's decided to sack the country's prime minister, suspend parliament and assume executive authority, saying it was because of a national emergency. His critics called it a coup. In a statement released Saturday, 113 officials from Ennahdha, including lawmakers and former ministers, said they had resigned.

Canadians, Chinese executive return home in prisoner swap

TORONTO (AP)—China, the U.S. and Canada completed a high-stakes prisoner swap with joyous homecomings for two Canadians held by China and for an executive of Chinese global communications giant Huawei Technologies charged with fraud, potentially bringing closure to a 3-year feud that embroiled the three countries. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hugged diplomat Michael Kovrig and entrepreneur Michael Spavor on the tarmac after they landed in Calgary, Alberta early Saturday. The men were detained in China in Dec. 2018, shortly after Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou, Huawei Technologies' chief financial officer and the daughter of the company's founder, on a U.S. extradition request. Many countries labeled China's action "hostage politics," while China has described the charges against Huawei and Meng as a politically motivated attempt to holdback China's economic and technological development.

Health & Wellness

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Running long distances to lose weight?

This is why you're wasting your time

By JOSH HAFNER
USA TODAY

Editor's note: *This story was originally published on USA TODAY in 2017.*

In the United States, a nation fatter than any other, running remains the most popular workout activity. That's according to a 2017 Fitbit analysis of fitness tracker user data.

And if tied-up treadmills and new pandemic routines across the country are any indication, much of that running is long distance.

Here's the cruel catch, though: Running miles at a time doesn't shed fat as efficiently as other forms of exercise. In some ways it doesn't help much at all.

As fitness author Lou Schuler explains in his book, The New Rules of Lifting For Women, relying on long-distance running to lose weight poses a key problem. The human body, ever-resourceful, eventually adapts to the repetitive nature of running. And that added efficiency means the body burns fewer calories for the same amount of work.

MORE EXERCISE, LESS CALORIES: Weight loss is more complicated than that

"If your goal is to be leaner, then greater endurance isn't really to your benefit," Schuler concludes.

Dr. William Roberts, a University of Minnesota physician and former president of the American College of Sports Medicine, likes running. He's blogged for Runner's World and served as medical director for the Twin Cities Marathon in St. Paul.

"But If I'm looking at a gym and looking at what can I get the most bang for my buck from, it's whatever I can use that moves and works the most muscle groups at the same time," Roberts said.

That means adding strength training to any pure running routine, Roberts said, the latter of which neglects upper body muscles. Losing weight requires about 40 to 60 minutes of activity most days of the week, he said, and at least half that time should be spent bulking up.

"If you can build strength and build muscle mass, you're going to burn more calories," Roberts said. "Even if you're idling."

That's because strength training causes tiny tears in the muscles. Those require calories as they repair, meaning your body keeps working long after you leave the gym. That's less so with steady, moderate jogging.

Fitness coach Adam Bornstein put it this way in Shape: "With cardio, you can slog away for 30 minutes at a lower intensity and burn 200 calories—or you can just eat 200 fewer calories per day. It's the same thing."

If you love running, fear not: Sprinting may work as well. A study from the University of Western Ontario asked one group of people to run at a slow, steady pace for 30 to 60 minutes, three times per week. Another group ran 30-second sprints, between four and six of them, three times each week—a way less time-intensive routine.

Both groups gained some muscle mass. But after six weeks, the sprinters shed more than twice the body fat of the joggers.

Corrections & clarifications: The original version of this article misstated a detail from a University of Western Ontario study. Both groups in the study gained some muscle mass.

Q&A: Mayo Clinic expert weighs in on traveling after getting vaccinated for COVID-19

As more people are vaccinated for COVID-19, many are looking forward to being able to travel again. While many restrictions have been lifted, COVID-19 has not gone away. So how safe is it to travel?

Dr. Stacey Rizza, a Mayo Clinic infectious diseases specialist, answers questions about traveling at this point in the pandemic.

Q. What is the most important step to ensuring safe travel?

A. Without a doubt, the most important thing people can do to protect themselves is to get vaccinated for COVID-19. I recommend that all eligible people in the U.S. get vaccinated for COVID-19. That is going to dramatically decrease your risk of getting infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and also dramatically decrease the risk that even if you were infected, you could transmit it to others.

Q. Are fully vaccinated travelers still required to wear a mask on an airplane?

A. Yes. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has relaxed mask guidelines for fully vaccinated Americans, the Transportation Security Administration has extended its federal mask mandate through September. That's because we still have a considerable number of people in the U.S. who are not vaccinated yet. And on airplanes, people are in close proximity for a longer period of time.

Beyond getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and wearing a mask in airports, and on planes, buses and trains, Dr. Rizza says it's also still important to practice good hand hygiene and keep your area clean with disinfectant wipes.

ALLEN J. SCHABEN/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Amid a busy getaway travel day for the Memorial Day weekend and the first holiday since coronavirus pandemic restrictions have been relaxed, a crowd of travelers check in for their flights at LAX at Delta Airlines, Terminal 2 at LAX.

Q. What steps should you take when you return from travel?

A. When people return from travel, some may wonder whether they should be tested for COVID-19. The need to test depends on where they're traveling from. If people are traveling within the U.S., and they are vaccinated, there's no need to be tested and there's no need to quarantine. The only thing they should do is to continue to monitor for symptoms.

If at any time during or after travel people start to develop symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19, such as, fever, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell, they should be evaluated by a provider and likely be tested for COVID-19.

If somebody is traveling from outside the U.S., they're going to need to be tested for COVID-19 at least three days before they board the airplane and come back to the U.S. But as long as they do that and the test is negative, no further quarantining or testing should be required once they're in the U.S.

Q. What should people who are traveling with children do?

A. For families looking to plan a summer getaway with children who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19, they can still travel safely. It just takes a little bit of thought and planning.

If you have children who are unvaccinated, that is probably not the time to bring them to areas where lots of people are congregating because we know they're still at risk of getting infected with COVID-19 if other people in that area are not vaccinated for COVID-19 and can transmit the virus. Even if your children are fastidious masking, there's still a risk.

If you have unvaccinated children, I think it's still safe to fly. But of course, they will always be masked. If you go to places that are more outdoors in more open space, where you're not congregated with lots of other people, I think it's very safe. You just have to think through the steps of what's going to happen on the vacation and position things so that you're not putting your unvaccinated children at risk."

Whether traveling or just attending events with large amounts of people, the bottom line is precautions still need to be taken.

We still do have people getting infected with COVID-19. We still have people being hospitalized. And, unfortunately, we still have people who are dying, as well. So we're not completely done with this. We still have to be careful. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date. For more information and all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the Mayo Clinic News Network and mayoclinic.org.

Life & Style

Harris 'View' interview delayed, hosts positive for COVID-19

NEW YORK (AP)—Vice President Kamala Harris' live interview on "The View" was abruptly delayed Friday after two hosts of the talk show learned they had tested positive for COVID-19 moments before Harris was to join them on the set.

Cohost Sunny Hostin and guest host Ana Navarro were at the table for the start of the show, but then were told to step off the set. Hostin and Navarro had been vaccinated, their colleagues said.

Harris, who was to be seated there as well, instead was later interviewed remotely from a different room in the ABC studio in New York. She did not have any contact with either host who tested positive, according to a White House official.

Cohosts Joy Behar and Sara Haines remained on set and conducted the truncated interview.

"Sunny and Ana are strong women and I know they are fine," said Harris when she made her delayed appearance. "But it also really does speak to the fact that they are vaccinated and vaccines make all the difference because otherwise we'd be concerned about hospitalization and worse."

The moment underscored the ever-present dangers of COVID-19 and provided a sobering reminder of the virus' reach.

It also threatened to overshadow the Biden administration's efforts to show progress in battling the virus. Just a few hours earlier, President Joe Biden urged those now eligible for COVID-19 booster shots to get the added protection a day after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention endorsed the doses for millions of older or otherwise vulnerable Americans.

"Ana and Sunny, at the last minute we realized they have tested positive for COVID so they have been taken off of the show," said a stunned Behar, who made the announcement after the show hurriedly went to a commercial when the two hosts were pulled off seat. Behar said Harris was removed to a separate location because "they don't want to take a chance."

Harris

"It's very important we keep her healthy and safe," Behar said. "The Secret Service is doing things to make her feel safe."

Both the show and aides from the vice president's office wanted to go ahead with the interview and contact tracing was quickly done to make sure Harris would not be exposed to anyone who might have had contact with Navarro and Hostin, officials said. The Secret Service then signed off on using a separate location in the studio.

The vice president carried on with her day after the TV appearance, meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Washington.

Bad Bunny tops Billboard Latin Music Awards with 10 trophies

CORAL GABLES, Fla. (AP)—Bad Bunny is the champion of the Billboard Latin Music Awards, taking home artist of the year honors and a whopping 10 trophies.

Among the awards received Thursday by the urban music superstar were Hot Latin Song of the Year for "Dákiti" and album of the year for "YHLQMDLG."

"Thanks always to all the audience for all the support, for supporting the music we make, thanks to all those who worked on this anthem," said Bad Bunny after receiving the Hot Latin Song award. "Thank you for always being there for us. You are the ones who give us this award."

The awards were handed out at a ceremony at the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Florida, that was attended by Latin superstars Marc Anthony, Camila Cabello and more.

Elon Musk, singer Grimes 'semi-separated' after three years

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Elon Musk and singer Grimes have ended their romantic relationship after three years.

The Tesla and SpaceX founder tells the New York Post's Page Six that he and the Canadian singer are "semi-separated."

But he says they remain on good terms, she still lives at his house in California and they continue to raise their 1-year-old son together.

"It's mostly that my work at SpaceX and Tesla requires me to be primarily in Texas or traveling overseas, and her work is primarily in LA," Musk told the Post. "She's staying with me now and Baby X is in the adjacent room."

A message seeking comment from a representative for Grimes was not immediately returned.

Former ABC News executive says Chris Cuomo harassed her

NEW YORK (AP)—A television executive who accused Chris Cuomo of groping her at a party 16 years ago says the CNN anchor needs a public education about sexual harassment and if he did that, "he'd be a hero instead of a cad."

Cuomo

The executive, Shelley Ross, said Friday she's concerned that Cuomo's reaction to her story and his role advising his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, indicates that he's learned little about harassment and what it does to women.

"I don't want to see anybody lose their job," Ross told The Associated Press. "I want to see people learn and to make the news business a better place and the workplace a better place."

Her story represented another embarrassment for the host of "Cuomo Prime Time," generally the network's top-rated show. He has been criticized for his role advising his brother, Andrew Cuomo, who resigned as New York governor last month over allegations of sexual harassment from multiple women.

Cuomo did not address the matter on his show Friday night.

Ross said in an opinion piece in The New York Times on Friday that Chris Cuomo had greeted her at a going-away party in 2005 with a bear hug "while lowering one hand to firmly grab and squeeze the cheek of my buttock."

Ross said Cuomo told her, "I can do this now that you're no longer my boss," and she responded, "No you can't," pushing him off while stepping back to reveal her husband, who saw the whole thing.

In an interview, Ross called it an attempt to diminish and belittle a female executive in front of her staff.

Cuomo sent an apologetic email to Ross shortly afterward saying he was "ashamed."

Asked for comment, Cuomo told the Times, "As Shelley acknowledges, our interaction was not sexual in nature. It happened 16 years ago in a public setting when she was a top executive at ABC. I apologized to her then, and I meant it." CNN had no additional comment on Friday.

R. Kelly fate now in jury's hands at sex trafficking trial

NEW YORK (AP)—R. Kelly's fate is now in a jury's hands after weeks of lurid testimony in his sexual misconduct trial.

The panel of seven men and five women began deliberating racketeering and sex trafficking charges against the R&B superstar Friday afternoon, ending the day without reaching a verdict They are due back in court on Monday to resume their work.

R. Kelly

A couple hours into the deliberations, the jurors sent the judge a note asking to review a transcript of testimony and evidence regarding a woman who claimed Kelly sexually assaulted her in 2003 when she was a 21-year-old radio station intern. She testified she was kept locked up in a recording studio for days and drugged before the assault.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys finished their closing arguments this week. The 54-year-old singer is accused of running a Chicago-based criminal enterprise that recruited his accusers for unwanted sex and mental torment.

The witnesses said Kelly subjected them to perverse and sadistic whims when they were underage. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Aging mother's daily life doesn't include daughter

DEAR ABBY: I'm nearing 57 and single. My mother, who is 78, lives in the same apartment complex. I always try to talk with her because we don't have much time together. All she wants to do is watch TV and read the paper. She allows me to talk to her for about a half-hour a day, then she has to go. If I visit her, she can only talk to me for a few minutes. Then she has to put the TV on.

I feel like I must beg her to talk with me. When I approached her about it, she said she's living her life how she wants to (basically without me). Because of that, I have decided to give up and spend only Christmas and her birthday with her. She probably wouldn't even notice. If you have any advice, I would like to see it.

HER SAD, HURT DAUGHTER

DEAR SAD, HURT DAUGHTER: I do have some. A half-hour phone call every day may be too much for your mother to handle. That she has to "limit" your calls to 30 minutes tells me you would like them to be even longer. (Every day!) Rather than punish her by distancing yourself and seeing her only twice a year, limit those visits and phone conversations to twice a week. I think it would be healthier for both of you if you find a way to become less emotionally dependent upon your mother. Also, plan some outings away from the apartment complex for you and your mom to share.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been together 20 years. In the middle of our living room sits an albatross of a coffee table. My husband's girlfriend made it for him in the late '60s/early '70s. I think it weighs 500 pounds.

I am finally redecorating the house and I want this table out of my life, but he won't hear of it. He says there will be absolutely no negotiating on the subject. I have tried every approach. I feel like I'm second fiddle to his past. How can I move forward without such resentment?

HATES THE RELIC IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR HATES: Congratulations on redecorating your home. Rather than argue with your husband about the albatross, it may be time to rethink how you use the space. Many men enjoy having an area just their own, a "man cave." Why not create one for him and put his treasured "love gift" in there, where you won't have to see it? If he gives you an argument, that is the time to tell him you have tolerated having it in the middle of your home for the last 20 years and you have been a good sport about it long enough.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Recently, I went swimming with my husband and his parents. We are around 50 years old; they are both 70. My in-laws took lots of photos and posted them on social media. I was not happy about it because I have gained weight during this COVID period. How do I mention this to them? Should I tell my husband?

UNCOMFORTABLE IN TEXAS

DEAR UNCOMFORTABLE: By all means tell your husband if he doesn't already know how uncomfortable this made you. Then ask your in-laws to PLEASE take the photos down because you hadn't realized until you saw them how much weight you had put on. If your relations with them are friendly, they will probably accommodate you. Then schedule another "shoot" when you are shipshape again.

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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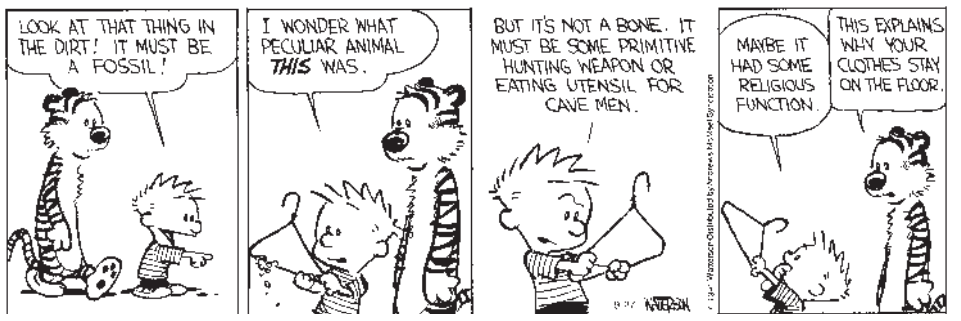
Pastimes

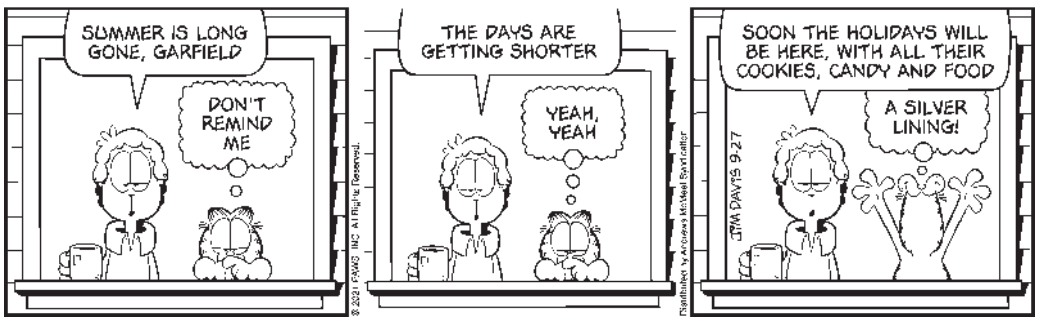
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LOOK AT THAT THING IN THE DIRT! IT MUST BE A FOSSIL!
I WONDER WHAT PECULIAR ANIMAL THIS WAS.
BUT IT'S NOT A BONE. IT MUST BE SOME PRIMITIVE HUNTING WEAPON OR EATING UTENSIL FOR CAVE MEN.
MAYBE IT HAD SOME RELIGIOUS FUNCTION.
THIS EXPLAINS WHY YOUR CLOTHES STAY ON THE FLOOR.

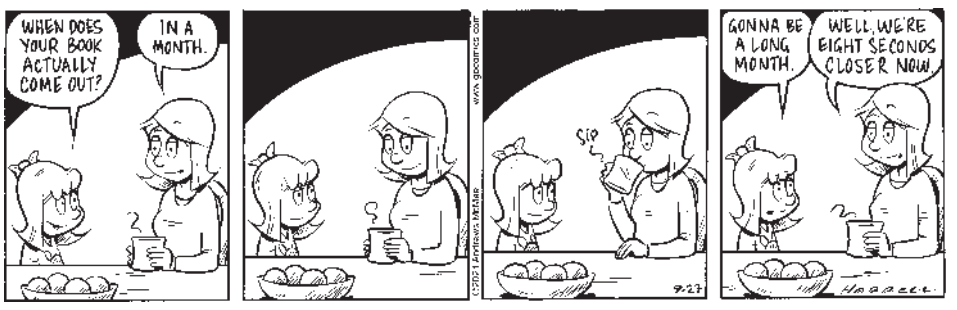
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


SUMMER IS LONG GONE, GARFIELD
DON'T REMIND ME
THE DAYS ARE GETTING SHORTER
YEAH, YEAH
SOON THE HOLIDAYS WILL BE HERE, WITH ALL THEIR COOKIES, CANDY AND FOOD
A SILVER LINING!
JIM DAVIS 9-27

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I WISH I HAD A TIME MACHINE.
SO YOU COULD TRAVEL TO THE FUTURE AND SEE ADVANCEMENTS IN MEDICINE AND TECHNOLOGY?
NO, SO I COULD GO BACK TO YESTERDAY BECAUSE I FORGOT TO DVR 'LEGO MASTERS'

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "True Life" network
4 Top card
7 Actress Kate
11 Baseball's Hershiser
13 Present location?
14 "East of Eden" twin
15 Assess
16 Financial pro
17 Fuzzy fruit
18 Japanese city
20 Summit
22 Bottom line
24 Clan-related
28 Tapas bar drink
32 Vodka brand, for short
33 Pulitzer winner James
34 Canine cry
36 Use scissors
37 Livid
39 Trumpets' kin
41 Not as small
43 Big snake
44 "Frozen" snowman
46 Lustrous gems
50 Arizona tribe
53 Lion's home
55 Get ready, briefly
56 Ireland
57 "I love," in Latin
58 Calendar span
59 — Kong
60 Dust collector?
61 Blue hue

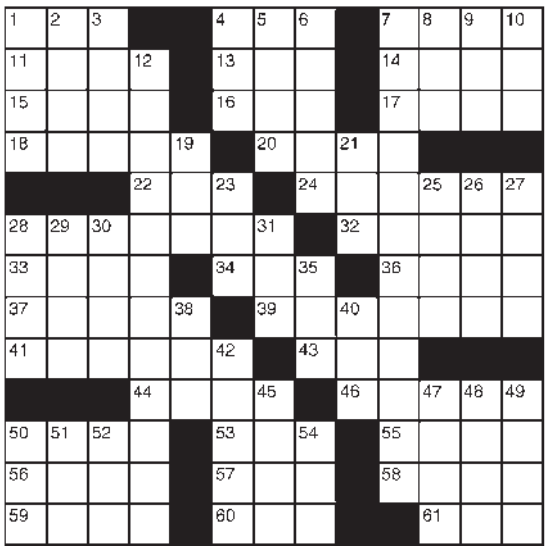
DOWN

1 TV alien
2 Serving aid
3 Presidential power
4 Alphabet starter
5 Nightclub of song
6 Precise
7 "Hurry up!"
8 MSNBC's Melber
9 Tier
10 Blackbird
12 "Hurry up!"
19 Couple's pronoun
21 "— Miniver"
23 Actress Farrow
25 Dog biscuit shape
26 Landed
27 Kissers
28 Go to sea
29 Taj Mahal city
30 Close
31 Lob's path
35 Watch chain
38 Snaky fish
40 Kanga's kid
42 Doppler device
45 Disaster aid org.
47 War god
48 Tap problem
49 Agile
50 Sneaky laugh
51 Acapulco gold
52 Brooch
54 Yule quaff

Solution time: 26 mins.

M	I	C	R	O		T	A	P		B	S	A
A	C	H	E	U		E	V	E		H	I	B
S	U	I	L	D		H	I	C	K	O	R	Y
		C	O	L	O	R	S		O	N	C	S
N	E	O		Y	M	A		S	A	X	E	S
A	G	R	A		A	N	S	E	L			
B	O	Y	I	S	H		C	R	A	V	E	N
			U	R	A	M	A		S	I	D	E
R	A	D	I	O		I	R	K		C	O	T
I	T	I	N		I	N	F	A	N	T		
G	R	E	G	O	R	Y		L	O	O	P	S
F	I			B	A	A		E	R	R	O	R
T	A	S		I	N	N		L	A	Y	L	A

Last Friday's Answer 09/27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lola Kirke, 31; Anna Camp, 39; Tamara Taylor, 51; Meat Loaf, 74.

Happy Birthday: Pick up the pace. You can accomplish a vast amount this year if you are disciplined and stick to whatever project you take until you reach your goal. Put your energy to good use, and your intelligence will kick in and surpass your expectations. Embrace life with a positive attitude, an open mind and the confidence to present and promote your achievements. Your numbers are 8, 14, 22, 27, 30, 33, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stick to what you know and do best and the people who help you shine. A partnership will require nurturing, but in the end, it will help you reach your objective. Reach out to someone who needs reassurance now. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Put your heart and soul into maintaining your lifestyle and your chance to advance. Don't consider unnecessary changes that will make others question your consistency. Refuse to let personal matters interfere with your productivity and ability to be a good leader. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't be fooled by what others do or say. Control your emotions and let your intellect lead the way. An energetic routine will encourage discipline and a healthy outlook to help you excel if you are passionate about your pursuits. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Arguing won't solve problems. Look for an alternative way to reach your chosen destination without causing a scene. Be secretive; divulge only what you are up to when you have everything in place and nothing is left to criticize. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Check in and share plans with someone who brings out the best in you. The feedback you receive will help you make better decisions regarding money. Rely on those you know you can trust to get things done your way. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Keep life simple and organized. Refuse to let emotional mix-ups lead to distraction or cause a problem with someone who can influence your well-being. Focus inward, and strive to look and feel your best. Update your appearance and clear your head. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Listen, then pass the information along. Make connections and broaden your outlook. Explore possibilities and find your niche. Own the decisions you make, and take the path that leads to personal happiness. Don't give up your dreams to accommodate others. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Use your imagination, and you'll come up with a plan that will help you change your current financial situation. Consider your assets and what's important to you, and let go of anything you no longer need for survival. Clear the passage forward. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Verify information, and say what's on your mind. Take the initiative to head in a direction that inspires you to use your skills, knowledge and experience in new and exciting ways. Build your future based on what you know and love. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Slow down and smell the roses. If you act too fast, it will lead to backtracking. You can think big, but stick to basics and change only what's necessary when you want to get things done. Don't fold under pressure. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Stay on course; don't stop until you are satisfied with what you achieve. A chance to make more money or invest in something lucrative looks promising. Invest in yourself, your surroundings and your future. Hard work will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Just be yourself, do your own thing and enjoy what life has to offer. Refuse to get into an emotional spat with someone who isn't trustworthy or refuses to look out for your best interests. Disappointment will prompt a change. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are philosophical, independent and determined. You are energetic and optimistic.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	7		3		5		4	
4		2				3		8
	5		1		4		9	
6			9		1			7
8		3	7		2	9		5
	3		5		7		8	
1		9				5		4
	6		4		8		2	

Difficulty Level ★ 9/27

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

6	4	7	8	5	3	1	2	9
5	8	9	7	1	2	3	6	4
1	3	2	9	4	6	5	8	7
2	1	5	6	9	8	7	4	3
9	6	4	3	7	1	8	5	2
8	7	3	5	2	4	6	9	1
4	5	1	2	6	7	9	3	8
7	9	8	4	3	5	2	1	6
3	2	6	1	8	9	4	7	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SCOTCH BONNET PEPPERS Solution: 9 letters

A	N	T	I	G	U	A	C	I	R	A	T	S	O	C
E	N	N	I	C	A	R	A	G	U	A	E	Y	C	A
F	M	T	B	A	E	L	L	I	V	O	C	S	R	P
I	O	A	I	S	L	A	N	D	S	I	I	Y	S	S
R	K	V	N	O	H	C	A	E	P	U	R	E	E	A
E	G	S	E	I	X	I	P	S	M	R	F	B	I	I
T	N	C	E	N	R	I	O	A	U	B	O	H	T	C
N	I	L	H	C	W	U	D	C	U	U	L	A	T	I
A	N	A	W	E	U	O	S	A	N	N	L	B	A	N
H	O	M	M	O	R	A	R	E	N	I	O	A	P	E
S	S	B	A	A	L	R	S	B	A	T	J	N	F	K
O	A	S	T	U	N	L	Y	K	N	S	S	E	E	C
M	E	A	T	S	P	A	E	R	I	P	E	R	E	I
A	S	R	E	P	P	E	P	Y	E	N	N	O	B	H
T	R	I	N	I	D	A	D	S	P	I	L	I	H	C

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Annuum, Antigua, Antioxidants, Ata Roda, Bake, Beef Patties, Bonney Peppers, Brown, Capsaicin, Cherry, Chicken, Chili, Costa Rica, Curry, Fire, Habanero, Islands, Jollof Rice, Lamb, Lips, Meats, Nicaragua, Oven, Panama, Peach, Pods, Pure, Reap, Ripe, Sauces, Scoville, Seasoning, Skin, Spicy, Stun, Suriname, Tam O'Shanter, Trinidad, Units, Yellow

Last Friday's Answer: Hip Hip

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Rays clinch 2nd consecutive AL East crown

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—The Tampa Bay Rays clinched their second straight AL East title, with Mike Zunino hitting a go-ahead homer and Brandon Lowe later adding a pair of RBI doubles to beat the Miami Marlins 7-3 on Saturday night.

Pete Fairbanks retired Lewis Brinson on a foul popup with the bases loaded for the final out, giving the Rays the chance to celebrate on the field. Earlier in the day, Tampa Bay's magic number was cut to one when the New York Yankees beat Boston 5-3.

There was a standing ovation from the season-high crowd of 23,783 at Tropicana Field when the Yankees' victory was announced after the top of the sixth inning.

Tampa Bay improved to 96-59 and won its fourth division title since becoming a major league team for the 1998 season. The club debuted as the Devil Rays then, and wore jerseys with that name during this clinching victory.

The Rays, who lost the World Series to the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games last season, have never won the championship.

Shane McClanahan (10-6) allowed one run and six hits over five innings.

Tampa Bay Rays players and coaches celebrate after beating the Miami Marlins 7-3 to clinch the American League East during a baseball game Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, in St. Petersburg, Fla. AP

Yankees 5, Red Sox 3

In Boston, Giancarlo Stanton hit a go-ahead grand slam over the Green Monster in the eighth inning and New York tied Boston for the top spot in the AL wild-card race.

Both teams are two games ahead of Toronto and three up on Seattle in the chase for two postseason spots. But the Yankees now have a chance to nudge in front of their longtime rivals in Sunday night's series finale at Fenway Park.

Stanton connected off reliever Darwinzon Hernandez with two outs to give the Yankees a 5-2 lead. The slugger also had three hits and a three-run homer Friday night to help New York win the series opener.

Cardinals 8, Cubs 5

In Chicago, The St. Louis Cardinals set a franchise record with their 15th straight win, boosted when catcher Yadier Molina and center fielder Harrison Bader helped pull off a wild double play against Chicago.

Bader, Tyler O'Neill and Paul DeJong homered as these Cardinals broke the team record of 14 wins in a row set in 1935, a year after Dizzy Dean and the Gas House Gang won the World Series.

Bader went 4 for 4 and scored three times as the Cardinals held their comfortable lead for the second NL wild card.

Nolan Arenado doubled to spark a three-run rally in the seventh after Codi Heuer (7-3) replaced starter Adrian Sampson.

Ian Happ drove in three runs for the Cubs, who have lost five straight and nine of 10. The loss snapped Chicago's streak of seven consecutive winning seasons at Wrigley Field.

Braves 10, Padres 8, 10 innings

In San Diego, Jorge Soler hit a go-ahead double with one out in the 10th inning for his fourth RBI, and Atlanta maintained its 1 1/2-game lead in the NL East while eliminating San Diego from playoff contention.

The Padres were one out from a win in regulation when Eddie Rosario hit a tying single off major league saves leader Mark Melancon, who was trying for his 39th.

Soler, who hit a three-run homer in the sixth, then helped seal the biggest collapse in Padres history with his hit off Daniel Hudson (5-3). Ozzie Albies added a sacrifice fly.

San Diego, led by superstars Fernando Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado and with a payroll of more than $170 million, had a one-game lead for the second NL wild card on Sept. 9 but then went into a devastating free-fall that cost the Padres a second consecutive postseason appearance.

Brewers 2, Mets 1

In Milwaukee, Corbin Burnes pitched seven brilliant innings to win his ninth consecutive decision and Milwaukee moved to the brink of clinching the NL Central title with a victory over New York.

The Brewers, already assured a fourth straight playoff berth, can wrap up the division crown Sunday with a win at home against the Mets or a Cardinals loss to the Cubs in Chicago.

Milwaukee won its second straight following a five-game skid, including a four-game sweep at home by the second-place Cardinals, who have won a team-record 15 in a row.

New York (73-81) has lost 12 of 15 and was eliminated from playoff contention earlier in the day when Philadelphia beat Pittsburgh.

Phillies 3, Pirates 0

In Philadelphia, Ranger Suarez pitched a four-hit shutout, Bryce Harper homered and the Philadelphia Phillies kept up their playoff push by beating Pittsburgh for their fifth straight win.

The Phillies remained 1 1/2 games behind first-place Atlanta in the NL East. Philadelphia visits the Braves for a three-game series beginning Tuesday.

Suarez (7-5) allowed just four singles, walked none and struck out seven in his first major league complete game. He didn't permit a runner past first base and faced only one batter more than the minimum.

Harper hit his 34th home run and Matt Vierling connected for his first in the majors as the Phillies (81-74) moved a season-best seven games over .500.

Giants 7, Rockies 2

In Denver, Brandon Belt went deep twice as San Francisco set a franchise record for home runs in a season, and the Giants beat Colorado to extend their NL West lead.

Belt hit a solo homer in the first inning and a three-run shot in the fifth off Jon Gray (8-12). His second drive was the team's 236th homer of the season, surpassing the 235 hit by the 2001 club. That squad featured Barry Bonds' major league-record 73 homers.

San Francisco stretched its division lead to two games over the Dodgers, who lost in Arizona. Both teams have seven games remaining.

Anthony DeSclafani was lifted for a pinch-hitter after going four innings and allowing two runs. The Giants used six relievers, with Tony Watson (7-4) earning the win.

Diamondbacks 7, Dodgers 2

In Phoenix, Ketel Marte and Carson Kelly homered early off Clayton Kershaw, Zac Gallen pitched one-run ball for six innings and Arizona kept Los Angeles from reaching 100 wins.

The Dodgers (99-56) fell two games behind first-place San Francisco in the NL West. The second-place team will host the NL wild-card game on Oct. 6, likely against St. Louis.

Gallen (3-10), who hadn't won since Aug. 26 against Philadelphia, struck out six in the first two innings.

Marte, who finished with three of the Diamondbacks' nine hits, homered on the first pitch from Kershaw (10-8). The left-hander gave up four runs, three earned, and six hits in 4 1/3 innings.

Arizona is tied for the major league lead with 105 losses and was just 2-8 in its previous 10 games.

Athletics 2, Astros 1

In Oakland, Calif., Starling Marte hit a game-ending double with one out in the ninth inning to lift Oakland over Houston.

The Athletics are four games behind co-wild card leaders New York and Boston, with Seattle and Toronto in between.

Houston's magic number to clinch the AL West is two over the Mariners.

Elvis Andrus singled off Ryan Pressly (5-3) to begin the Oakland ninth and scored the winning run, but injured his left ankle on the play.

Andrew Chafin (2-3) retired three batters to get the win.

Blue Jays 6, Twins 1

In Minneapolis, Teoscar Hernández, Marcus Semien and George Springer homered, and Toronto held its position in the playoff chase by beating Minnesota.

Robbie Ray (13-6) scattered three hits in six innings as the Blue Jays ended a three-game slide.

Toronto stayed two games behind Boston and New York in the AL wild-card race with seven games remaining.

Semien hit his 43rd home run in the sixth for a 3-1 lead. That tied him with Dave Johnson of Atlanta in 1973 for the most home runs in a season by a second baseman.

Springer snapped an 0-for-16 skid with a two-run shot in the seventh.

Ray, who leads the AL with a 2.68 ERA and tops the majors with 244 strikeouts, gave up one run and fanned six.

Indians 6, White Sox 0

In Cleveland, Eli Morgan allowed one hit in six innings and José Ramirez drove in three runs, powering Cleveland past the AL Central champion White Sox.

Chicago remained four games behind AL West leader Houston in the race for home-field advantage in the Division Series. Both teams have seven games remaining.

Morgan (4-7) struck out six and walked one, giving up only a double to Yoan Moncada in the fifth.

Ramirez hit a two-run homer and had an RBI single off Lance Lynn (10-6), whose winless streak reached nine starts. The All-Star gave up six runs in six innings, striking out six without a walk, and has not won since July 25.

Angels 14, Mariners 1

In Anaheim, Calif., Shohei Ohtani tripled in his first two at-bats and Los Angeles damaged Seattle's playoff chances by ending its six-game winning streak.

Jhonathan Diaz (1-0) pitched seven strong innings in relief for his first major league win and the Angels scored eight runs in the third as the Mariners dropped three games out in the AL wild-card chase with seven to play.

Boston and New York are tied atop the wild-card standings, with Toronto two games back in the race for two spots.

Ohtani scored two runs and had three RBIs to raise his season total to 98. He tripled twice off starter Tyler Anderson, then was walked in his next two plate appearances. The two-way star has walked 13 times in the last four games, tying a major league record.

Jared Walsh was 4 for 5 with four RBIs for the Angels, and Brandon Marsh scored four times. Luis Rengifo hit a solo homer.

Tigers 5, Royals 1

In Detroit, Miguel Cabrera drove in four runs, including a go-ahead double in the sixth inning, and Detroit downed Kansas City.

Jeimer Candelario delivered an RBI double for the Tigers, who have won five of six. Jonathan Schoop had two hits and scored two runs.

Drew Hutchison (3-1) allowed only an unearned run in 2 2/3 innings of relief. Michael Fulmer got four outs for his 12th save.

Tigers left fielder Akil Baddoo robbed Hunter Dozier of a homer with a leaping catch.

Orioles 3, Rangers 2

In Baltimore, Kelvin Gutierrez homered to cap a three-run seventh inning and Baltimore beat Texas.

Jose Trevino and Nathaniel Lowe went deep for the Rangers, who have lost nine of 11 to fall to 56-99. Texas is headed toward its first 100-loss season since 1973.

The game was scoreless in the seventh when the 105-loss Orioles broke through against starter Jordan Lyles (9-13). Trey Mancini walked and scored on Pat Valaika's double, and Gutierrez followed with his second homer.

Reds 7, Nationals 6

In Cincinnati, Nick Castellanos hit a solo home run with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Cincinnati a win over Washington.

The Reds remained six games behind St. Louis for the second NL wild card with seven remaining. Cincinnati won back-to-back home games for the first time since sweeping Miami in a four-game series Aug. 19-22.

Castellanos connected off Patrick Murphy (0-3), extending his career-high homer total to 31.

Keibert Ruiz and Lane Thomas homered for the Nationals.

Injuries to McCaffrey, Horn sour Panthers' 3-0 start

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Normally teams would be fired up after starting the season 3-0.

But there is plenty of concern in Carolina after losing three key players in a 24-9 win over the Houston Texans on Thursday night, including running back Christian McCaffrey, who will miss multiple weeks with a strained hamstring.

The team may have lost standout rookie cornerback Jaycee Horn for the season, according to coach Matt Rhule. The first defensive player selected in this year's NFL draft has three broken bones in his right foot and the team said Horn will decide after consulting with his family on whether to shut it down for the season.

Also, safety Juston Burris has a groin injury and it's uncertain how long he will be out.

McCaffrey, a 2019 All-Pro, pulled up on the game's third series while running a sweep and did not return. McCaffrey, who missed 13 games last season due to injuries, appeared on the verge of a big game and there's no denying the Panthers have a completely different offense without him in the backfield. McCaffrey's mere presence allows Carolina's play-action passing game to function, and without him the Panthers could really struggle in Week 4 against Dallas.

Chuba Hubbard and Royce Freeman are Carolina's other options at running backs, representing a significant drop-off from McCaffrey.

Carolina Panthers quarterback Sam Darnold (14) breaks away from Houston Texans defensive tackle Roy Lopez (91) during the second half of an NFL football game Thursday, Sept. 23, 2021, in Houston. AP

Hubbard struggled to find room after McCaffrey left the game in the first quarter, but had a decent second half to finish with 52 yards rushing on 11 carries. Freeman had 17 yards on five carries.

The good news for the Panthers is quarterback Sam Darnold is playing well.

He completed 23 of 34 passes for 304 yards with no interceptions and ran for two more touchdowns. The fourth-year QB has thrown for more than 275 yards with a rating above 95 in three straight games.

"For us, we're starting to find our identity as an offense," Darnold said. "I've just got to, whatever play is called, we've got to execute that play. That's my job is to get us in the right play and make sure we're hitting on all cylinders, and the offense is moving in the right direction."

WHAT'S WORKING

Carolina's run defense continues to be outstanding, holding the Texans to 42 yards rushing on 17 carries. The Panthers entered the game with the league's No. 1 ranked run defense and they'll almost certainly keep that spot after lowering their average to 45 yards per game. That's a huge credit to defensive tackles Derrick Brown and DaQuan Jones, who have been stout up front and set the tone for Carolina's pass defense. By making opponents one dimensional, defensive coordinator Phil Snow has dialed up some elaborate blitzes and the Panthers have responded with 14 sacks. That ties a franchise record through three games.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Carolina's offensive line. It allowed five quarterback hits and three sacks on Darnold because of protection issues. Carolina has been rotating players at the two guard spots and left tackle is far from a secure position with Cameron Erving making far too many mistakes. The Panthers have the option of moving Taylor Moton to left tackle, but coach Matt Rhule seems against making that move. This is a group that is going to continue to struggle when the Panthers play better defenses like Tampa Bay.

STOCK UP

D.J. Moore has clearly emerged as Carolina's undisputed No. 1 receiver and he played like it Thursday night. With McCaffrey exiting the game, the Panthers needed someone to step up and Moore did, catching eight of the 12 passes thrown his way for 126 yards. He appeared to cramp up at one point, but did return. The Panthers also got a big game from rookie Tommy Tremble, who ran for a 7-yard touchdown on a tight end sweep and also hauled in a 30-yard reception to help set up another score.

STOCK DOWN

Conversely, wide receiver Robby Anderson has not been very productive since signing a three-year, $37.5 million contract extension before the season. After catching 95 passes for 1,096 yards last year with Teddy Bridgewater under center, Anderson has just five receptions for 103 yards, 57 of those coming on a touchdown reception in Week 1 against the Jets. The lack of chemistry between Darnold and Anderson is a little perplexing given they played together for two seasons with the Jets.

INJURED

Rookie Hubbard and veteran Freeman are expected to carry the load with McCaffrey out against the Cowboys. Rashaan Melvin and A.J. Bouye will see additional reps filling in for Horn. Look for Sam Franklin to step in at safety if Burris is sidelined for any length of time. The Panthers could make a move at safety given they're a little thin after placing Myles Hartsfield on injured reserve last week. And if John Miller's shoulder becomes a lingering issue, Trent Scott or Brady Christensen could fill in at guard. Miller banged up his shoulder against the Texans but stayed in the game.

KEY NUMBER

573 — Yards allowed by the Panthers' defense, the fewest of any NFL team that started 3-0 since the 1992 Reggie White-led Philadelphia Eagles. They are also 20th team in the Super Bowl era to give up 600 or fewer yards, 30 or fewer points in the first three games. Of the previous 19, 15 made the playoffs.

NEXT STEPS

Expect Rhule to preach the "next-man-up" mentality when the Panthers get back to work next week. Carolina has the weekend off before returning to the state of Texas on Oct. 3 to face the Cowboys. Carolina is 5-9 against Dallas.

What will the 76ers do with Simmons? Philly guard wants out

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The rift between the Philadelphia 76ers and their star guard was shattered beyond repair. There was no turning back, the deal was done—Allen Iverson was traded to the Detroit Pistons.

Team president Pat Croce had tried mending the relationship between Iverson, the franchise star, and coach Larry Brown but found both sides unwilling to bend on the thornier aspects of their disagreements.

"It was a horrifying experience," Croce said.

None more so than when Croce took the call from general manager Billy King in his Ocean City, New Jersey, home in the summer of 2000 saying that a trade had been reached with the Pistons and that Iverson—his habitual tardiness and clashes with Brown on the rise—had played his last game with the Sixers.

"I couldn't protect Allen," Croce said. "If he wasn't going to listen to the coach and if he was going to be late for practice or miss practice, I couldn't do anything about that."

The next call Croce made was to Iverson, with a simple message: "You're going to be traded, Allen. I can't protect the front porch if you leave the backdoor open. There's no way."

That was that—until it wasn't. Sixers backup center Matt Geiger refused to waive a contract clause that would have earned him a 15% pay raise if he was traded. Unable to find another combination that worked, the deal was off.

AI stayed a Sixer.

And he didn't pout that season. He didn't whine because things were said by his coach that hurt his feelings. Years before his famous diatribe about practice, Iverson was on his professional best behavior in 2000-01 and led the Sixers to the NBA Finals while he won MVP.

"He exceeded everything he said he was going to do," Croce said. "He never missed practice, he never was late for practice anymore. I'm never going to say he loved practice. I'm telling you, he strength-trained, he did everything that was asked for him."

Two decades later, the Sixers are again on a collision course for divorce with another mercurial guard, Ben Simmons. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Simmons—with $147 million and four years left on his contract—said in a meeting last month in Los Angeles with key franchise figures including team president Daryl Morey and coach Doc Rivers that he wanted to be traded. Rivers went on ESPN this week and tried to make peace in public with Simmons, stating his case for the three-time All-Star to return to the team that made him the No. 1 pick of the 2016 draft.

"I can tell you up front, we would love to get Ben back, and if we can, we're going to try to do that," Rivers said. "Ben has a long contract, so it's in our hands and we want him back."

The Sixers, of course, should want Simmons back, especially if Morey can't find a suitable trade that would bring back the kind of haul that would keep the franchise near the top of the Eastern Conference.

Near the top—not at the peak.

The 25-year-old from Australia has long been his own player in Philadelphia, refusing, for example, former coach Brett Brown's plea in 2019 to shoot at least one 3-pointer a game. Just try to be better, Brown asked. Simmons instead attempted seven 3s that season and is 5 for 34 over his four-year career.

But the final straw just may have been the aftermath of the top-seeded Sixers' shocking second-round exit to the Atlanta Hawks last season in the East semifinals. The Sixers lost three games at home, and Simmons took the blame from fans and even inside the locker room.

Simmons shot 25 for 73 (34%) from the line in the playoffs and missed 27 alone against Atlanta.

His defining moment as a Sixer came when he passed up a wide-open dunk that would have tied the game late in Game 7. He heard footsteps and passed the ball—and passed on the chance to lead the Sixers into the next round.

Joel Embiid, long a Philly fan favorite and NBA MVP runner-up, called the play the "turning point" in the season-ending defeat. Rivers was asked postgame if Simmons could still be a point guard for a championship team like the kind the Sixers want to become.

"I don't know that question or the answer to that right now," he said. "You know, so I don't know the answer to that."

Rivers was Simmons' staunchest defender all season, praising the guard on every Zoom interview he could, even pushing back at questions that suggested Simmons wasn't doing enough because he couldn't shoot. Rivers stumped for Simmons as a defensive player of the year candidate and said the guard was "too good" for criticism lobbed his way.

"He does other things for your team, and I just don't understand why that's not sinking in in our city," Rivers said during the first-round series against the Wizards. "You know, everybody on the team doesn't have to be a scorer to help the team. Ben scores, but Ben creates scoring for us. That's what he does."

Whatever the reason of his unhappiness (Simmons hasn't talked publicly since the season ended), the Sixers enter training camp next week trying to win in Embiid's prime with Simmons prepared to sit out.

Croce said when Iverson came back, "he realized he was in the wrong."

Will Simmons see the issue the same way?

"If he said, 'I'm going to come back, I'm going to work harder, I'm going to work on my free throws, whatever,' Philadelphia would embrace him," Croce said. "He'd be the Second Coming. It would be unbelievable. Truly. It would be great for the team, it would be great for the franchise. And then if he didn't want to stay, he'd be worth something.

"Right now, his feelings are hurt and he doesn't realize he's the genesis of his own hurt."

Kio is unstoppable in 45-point thrashing of CNMI

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Team Kio continues to lord in over in the 2021 Island-wide Men's BudLight Basketball League after thumping Team CNMI, 112-67, Wednesday night at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

The undefeated team blasted CNMI right from the get-go after building a 20-point lead, 32-12, after the first quarter thanks to the 9 points of Dustin Sablan. He then spread the wealth in the second quarter as six different players made it to the scoreboard in the period, as Kio remained comfortably in front, 55-26, at the break.

Robert Reyes then shone for Kio in the third, unloading 10 of his 29 total points to give his team a 28-point margin, 79-51, heading into the fourth and final quarter.

The Fat Lady already sung as the payoff period got underway and the only thing left undecided was the final score. Reyes fired another 8 points and Heinz Cabrera and Lucio Sanchez added 6 apiece for good measure as Kio rolled to the 45-point carnage.

A total of six Kio players finished in double figures in the win, its eight straight against zero losses. Dennis Borja led a parade of Borjas in scoring for CNMI with 19 markers. The team is now at 2-2 in the league standings.

In the second game, Vinny Untalan and Wesley Walker combined for 37 points to help Rampage to an 87-40 win over Ko'Bees. It was the eighth win in nine tries for Rampage, while the loss dropped Ko'Bees to 2-7.

Team Kio's Robert Reyes, left, and Team CNMI's Estevan Borja jump it off in center court at the start of their 2021 Island-wide Men's BudLight Basketball League match Wednesday night at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

First Game

Kio 112 – Reyes 29, D. Sablan 22, Sanchez 16, Cruz 14, Cabrera 11, King 10, Loise 9, J. Sablan 5, Manglona 3, Kiyoshi 2.

CNMI 67 – D. Borja 19, K. Borja 11, A. Borja 9, Lizama 7, Monkeya 2.

Scoring by quarters: 32-12, 55-26, 79-51, 112-67.

Second Game

Rampage 87 – Untalan 19, Walker 18, J. Epity 14, Pascua 12, T. Borja 10, E. Epity 6, Cepeda 4, Erickson 2, R. Borja 2.

Ko'Bees 40 – Jay 13, Slim 9, Chino 6, Magas 6, Miklo 2, Stanley 2, Hardpol 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-2, 47-16, 67-30, 87-40.

4 PUNCH

From Page 20

"Something deep inside me was telling me that 'I will lose I can't do it, it's too long, they're going to beat me, they're too fast.' I was very negative, hiding it with a smile and fake confidence," she said.

In the end, however, once she was in the water, her competitiveness kicked in.

"But they all disappeared once I started swimming. I knew what I had to do, what I must do, and I did it without fail, which led me to win second right behind my sister. Asaka. I was so happy I won and I screamed out in joy, but that wasn't the end. My journey starts from here, as a swimmer representing CNMI at the World Championships in Abu Dhabi. I have set a clear goal in mind, never give up, and give it my 200 percent all during practice even if it means I would have to overwork myself because hard work pays off. During the meet at Abu Dhabi, my goal is to get best times in all events that I will swim. I am looking forward to find out how this journey will unfold," she added.

Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura said seeing her Top 4 swimmers win the qualifiers was bittersweet.

"Only two swimmers each gender from the team could participate in this selection race. Our team has more than two swimmers who have times worthy to become a national representative. No matter who participated, they would get good time and win the race. That's why it was really hard for me as a coach to choose two only of them for team representative. I know swimmers who weren't chosen by me for this selection race were really sad," he said.

That's why it's Kimura's sincere belief that Suzuki, Tenorio, and the Litulumar sisters swam with the hearts of their teammates.

"I believe the fact that the four swimmers won exactly because of their gratitude to their teammates. The swimmers who lost the team selection cheered very hard for our team representatives. As a coach, I've never been so happy. To me, all Tsunami swimmers are my pride. Not only the winners of the qualifying race," he said.

TANIA

From Page 20

Snyder also served as Tan's coach at Saipan International School, where she finished high school.

"All of NMA is very proud of Tania, winning her very first 6K race. As her coach at SIS, I am particularly proud that she is not only keeping up with her running but excelling at it. Go Tania! Go NMA and go SIS!" he said.

Asked what's the secret of her winning the Jasper XC Fall, Tan remained modest, adding she's just happy that she can train regularly now in the U.S. mainland.

"I honestly just went out and ran…In the U.S., things are practically back to normal which is nice so we've been training regularly and normally," he said.

Team-wise, Fordham finished fifth overall in the women's varsity race that was won by Rider University. Tan and Fordham will next be racing at the 2021 Metropolitan Cross Country Championship, hosted at Van Cortlandt Park on Friday, Oct. 8.

Tan is no stranger to competitive running in the CNMI. She is a veteran of the Saipan International School Cross Country and Track teams where she led the team in distance events. She was also a two-time national runner for cross country at the Asia Pacific Cross Country Invitational as well as represented the CNMI in the 2018 Oceania Cross Country Championships in Australia, the XVI Pacific Games in Samoa, and the Oceania Micronesian Regional Championships in 2018 where she set her previous PR of 12:20:99.

Registration forms available online for World Tourism Day Fun Runs

Registration forms for the World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs in The Marianas on Sept. 27, 2021, are now downloadable on The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com.

The World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs will be held on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan.

On Rota, the run will start at 5:30pm at East Harbor and proceed to Kokomo and back. On Tinian, the run will start at 5:30pm at Taga Beach and proceed along Broadway to the Tinian International Airport intersection and back. On Saipan, registration will open at 5pm at Mina'chom Atdao pavilion at Kilili Beach Park. The run will start at 6pm along Saipan Beach Road Pathway to Quartermaster Road and back. Registration is free and World Tourism Day T-shirts will be distributed while supplies last. In support of Cultural Heritage Month and recognizing the significance of indigenous culture to tourism, participants are encouraged to wear Chamorro and Carolinian attire. Cash prizes will be awarded for men and women's divisions, $300 for first place, $200 for second place, and $100 for third place. Cash prizes and in-kind prizes for the Chamorro and Carolinian attire include $100 for first place, $75 for second place, and $50 for third place.

The Marianas is joining the global travel and tourism community in celebrating the United Nations World Tourism Organization's World Tourism Day on Sept. 27.

"As tourism slowly picks up in The Marianas, we are slowly also bringing back events for our community and the few visitors coming in. Thanks to the strict guidelines of our COVID-19 Task Force and strong community cooperation to keep safe, we are able to do so," said Marianas Visitors Authority Community projects Manager Martin Duenas.

"We invite everyone to celebrate World Tourism Day in support of what tourism means for our Marianas community."

Businesses and other groups are invited to participate in island beautification cleanups on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota from 8:30am to 9:30am. Interested groups may contact the MVA for coordination of cleanup locations and trash pickup. The MVA will also provide trash bags, gloves, and water.

In collaboration with the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture, CNMI Museum Day will highlight the importance of promoting history for tourism by offering free tours at the museum. High school Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically (MY WAVE) clubs will be hosted from 9am to 11am. Tourism partners may avail of free tours from 11am to 1pm. The general public can visit the museum from 1pm to 5pm. COVID-19 protocols, including social distancing, will be observed.

For more information on World Tourism Day activities on Saipan, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 1.670.664.3210. On Tinian, contact MVA Field Operations supervisor Vida Borja at vborja@mymarianas.com or 1.670.433.9365 . On Rota, contact MVA Field Operations supervisor David Atalig at datalig@mymarianas.com or 1.670.532.0327. ***(PR)***

GCA

From Page 20

were flying high with a 3-0 record entering their showdown. The Lady Eagles, however, gave SIS 1 a cold-blooded reminder on who currently rules the roost in high school girls volleyball, giving their opponents a neat lessons following a shockingly easy 25-15, 25-5 victory.

The Lady Eagles 1 team is made up of Karina Dilse, Cleirise Dacumos, Katriel Saures, Hye Jin Elliott, Soleil Lamar, Vicky Wang, Mint Karsuaythong, Eunice Pagaduan, and Allyssa Omampo. GCA 1 is now 4-0 after the win, while SIS fell to 3-1.

In other games last Saturday, Marianas High School 1 kept pace with GCA 1 with a 25-8, 25-22 triumph over Kagman High School. MHS 1 raised its record to 4-0, while KHS fell to its third straight loss after opening the season with a win. The Lady Dolphins 1 squad includes Arisa Custodio, Abigail Decena, Madelleen Narciso, Fatima Monterubio, Julie Ann Capayas, Daejah Benavente, Rizza Relucio, Raina Avelino, Raenna Ramarui, Kalista Klaver, and Kina Rangamar.

MHS 2 leveled its record to 2-2 after exacting a 25-16, 21-25, 15-7 nipping of sister team MHS 3. Mt. Carmel School 1 also found itself on the winning side after dismantling winless Saipan Southern High School 1, 25-10, 25-19. It was the third win in four outings for MCS 1.

MCS 3 also raised its record to 3-1 following its tough three-set win over SIS 2, 16-25, 25-13, 15-9. SIS remained winless after four contests. MCS 2 is now at .500 after grinding out a 19-25, 25-21, 15-13 nail-biter against KHS. In the final game, SIS 1 bounced back from its loss to GCA 1 earlier in the day with a 27-25, 22-35, 15-10 victory over MHS 3. It was the fourth win in five tries for SIS 1.

Public School System athletic program director Nick Gross said girls high school volleyball will make up Thursday's cancelled games today, Sept. 27, also at the MHS Gym.

"Regarding the postponed play from Thursday, Sept. 23, we will plan to play those games on Monday, Sept. 27. Please make appropriate plans," he said in an email message to all participating teams.

Makeup games today start at 4:30pm with MCS 1 taking on SIS 1 and MCS 2 facing SSHS 1. The 5:30pm twin games will have SSHS 2 squaring off against MCS 3 and GCA 2 hoping for an upset against sister team GCA 1. The finals games of the six-game set will then have MHS 2 challenging KHS and SIS 2 testing MHS 3.

Kio is unstoppable in 45-point thrashing of CNMI PAGE 19

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Rays clinch 2nd consecutive AL East crown PAGE 17

4 punch tickets to World Championships

By MARK RABAGO
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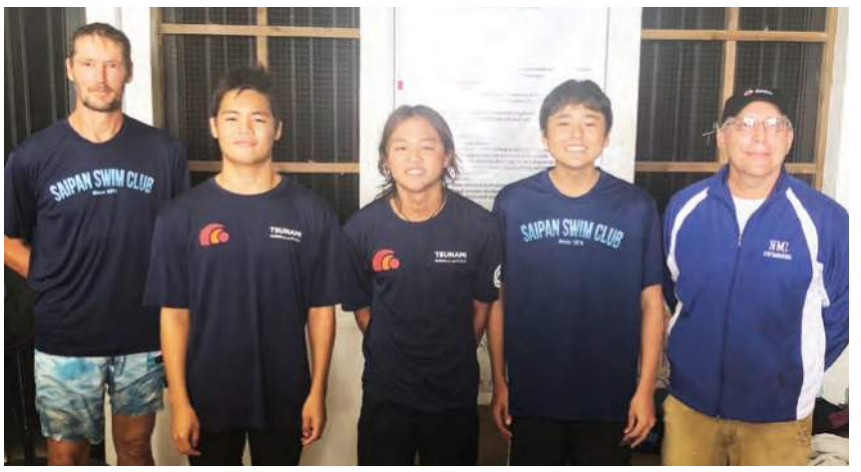
Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Asaka and Shoko Litulumar will represent the CNMI in the 2021 FINA World Championships in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from Dec. 16 to 21.



Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Jinnosuke Suzuki and Juhn Tenorio and Saipan Swim Club's Taiyo Akimaru are flanked by SSC coach Richard Sikkel and Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh during the awards ceremony of last Saturday's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series at the 500 Sails building in Susupe.
MARK RABAGO

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Asaka Litulumar and Shoko Litulumar are flanked by SSC coach Richard Sikkel and Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh during the awards ceremony of last Saturday's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series at the 500 Sails building in Susupe.
MARK RABAGO

The Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan bets formalized their selections after topping anew Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe. The Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation-sanctioned race served as the final qualifier for the World Championships. The first two qualifiers were held last July 10 and 24.

Suzuki topped the final men's qualifier with a time of 12:27.45. He was followed by Tenorio in 12:55.59. SSC's Taiyo Akimaru and Jakey Deleon Guerrero finished third and fourth with times of 13:50.63 and 14:33.10, respectively.

The qualifiers' top dog said he's looking forward to represent the CNMI in the World Championships in Abu Dhabi.

"I am glad that I was able to place first in the qualifiers and could hopefully swim in the World Championships in Abu Dhabi. My goal is to get personal best times and break a record," he said.

Tenorio, for his part, seconded Suzuki's desire to bring honor to their home islands by taking part anew in the international competition.

"I am very happy to represent our island once again. I will continue to work hard and show my best performance on race day."

Asaka Litulumar, meanwhile, was the first to touch the flag in the final women's qualifier with a time of 14:44.28. Shoko Litulumar was not far back at 14:45.09, while SSC's Jinie Thompson was third in 15:00.63. SSC's Savita Sikkel came in fourth at 15:33.49.

The elder Litulumar said out of all the three races she swam, last Saturday's was the most difficult because she and her sister were racing side by side the whole time.

"I've never felt more scared in my life, but this was a great race. I'm excited to go to the World Championships in Abu Dhabi as a national representative for the CNMI. Great job to all the participants and volunteers for their hard work. I would like to thank 500 Sails for letting us race at Guma Sakman. I would also like to thank my parents and coach for always supporting me and giving me great advice to become a faster swimmer," she said.

Shoko, for her part, admitted experiencing nerves before the race.

See 4 PUNCH on Page 19

Hye Jin Elliott and Grace Christian Academy 1 remain undefeated after beating Saipan International School 1 in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.
MARK RABAGO

GCA 1 beats SIS 1 in battle of unbeatens

By MARK RABAGO
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Grace Christian Academy 1 defeated Saipan International School 1 in a meeting of undefeated teams in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

After Tropical Depression 20W cancelled games last Thursday, the Lady Eagles 1 made sure to whip up a storm of its own when it went up against erstwhile unblemished team, SIS 1, in one of two 9am matchups.

Like GCA 1, the Lady Geckos 1

See GCA on Page 19

Tania tops Jasper XC Fall Invite

By MARK RABAGO
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The CNMI's Tania Tan won the women's division of the Jasper XC Fall Invite held last Saturday, Sept. 25, at Twin Ponds on the Farm in Montgomery, N.Y.

Running for Fordham University, where the 19-year-old is a sophomore, Tan successfully negotiated the 6-kilometer cross country route in 23:58.9 to beat Marist College's Mary Dougherty and her own teammate, Emmy Longmore, who submitted times of 24:14.2 and 24:54.2, respectively.

She said she was shocked after crossing the finish line first in the Jasper XC Fall Invite last weekend.

"I was very surprised to place first because I wasn't going into the race expecting that. But I've been feeling good during our workouts recently so my coach told me before the race that he believed I could do really well today, I just had to have faith in myself," she told *Saipan Tribune* in a social media message.

Northern Marianas Athletics distance running coach Ron Snyder said they're absolutely thrilled that one of the CNMI's best runners is making her mark in college athletics.

See TANIA on Page 19

Tania Tan, seen here in a file photo from a recent race, was the first woman to cross the finish line in the Jasper XC Fall Invite held last Saturday, Sept. 25, at Twin Ponds on the Farm in Montgomery, N.Y.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO